

SAINT PAULS.

FEBRUARY, 1868.

ALL FOR GREED.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BRIDEGROOM.

TIME wore on, the winter passed over, and early in the spring Monsieur de Vêrancour had been brought to regard as admissible the event which had at first appeared in his sight as so enormously ridiculous;—the possible marriage, namely, of his eldest daughter with Richard Prévost.

It must not, however, be supposed that this was easily accomplished. Félicie did not find it sufficient to gain one or two isolated battles; she had a complete campaign to undertake, and her final victory was due only to her patience and consummate good generalship. She never lost her temper and never lost a point; but let what would be the insignificance of her gain of the previous day, she always contrived to add some small gain to it on the following one, so that, in the course of a month or two, by dint of clever treatment, the Vicomte got quite accustomed to his new position, and, in the prospects of her future wealth, consented to lose sight of the fact that his daughter would become the wife of a valet de chambre's grandson. One thing was settled at the very outset, and that was, that the matter should be kept secret; that no word of the future engagement should transpire; and that not until Monsieur Richard had left D——, and taken rank in the department as Monsieur de Châteaubréville, should he be presumed to have aspired to the honour of Mademoiselle de Vêrancour's hand.

What principally disposed the Vicomte in favour of the coming mésalliance was, that, besides the wealth of the bridegroom, the whole proceeding had about it a character of barter that was serious and satisfactory. There was nothing sentimental in the whole concern. All was business-like and full of calculation. Had the unfortunate Monsieur Richard put himself in the light of an aspiring lover,

of a man who, for the sake of becoming Felicie's husband, would sacrifice every other earthly consideration in life, it is probable that the young lady herself would have crushed his hopes with withering contempt, and it is certain that on such terms the Vicomte would never have consented to accept Monsieur Richard as his son-in-law. But the latter was wise enough to understand this, and he never once alluded to the possibility of his marriage being anything more than a business transaction. This put all parties at their ease, and made the situation clear and comprehensible. Monsieur Richard, having a very large fortune, which, situated as he was, could be of no use to him, found means, through the condescension of the Verancour family, of securing to himself a status in society, and of being admitted to spend his money among people of birth and rank. This, of course, could not be purchased at too high a rate, and, in fact, Monsieur Richard got it a vast deal too cheap. On the other hand, Mademoiselle Felicie, instead of being condemned to lead a life of single blessedness in an out-of-the-way province, with not enough to live upon decently, acquired the free disposal of an income much exceeding that of the most fashionable ladies for several miles round. This was as it should be, and there was a sense of fitness in the fact of a Verancour enjoying a hundred thousand francs a year.

The work of renovation and embellishment at Châteaubréville went on apace, and would have been in an advanced stage of completion, had it not been for poor Monsieur Richard's health. The winter had been extremely severe, and the unlucky young man had been a frequent sufferer. His lungs were said to be delicate, though the fact was made a matter of dispute between two rival practitioners; the old doctor at D—— declaring for the weakness of the chest, and a young doctor, lately settled at Cholet, taking the part of "nerves," and at most only tolerating the notion of bronchial susceptibility. But then this new disciple of Æsculapius was a man who made light of everything, according to the way of the modern Parisian school. It was a wonder he believed in death,—some said he called it an accident,—and he did not promise to have any success in his provincial sphere. He treated poor Monsieur Richard somewhat severely, never called him "poor" at all, and shrugged his shoulders at those who did. He openly declared that the ailments of Monsieur Richard were only laziness and self-indulgence, and told him to his face that he would never be well till he took more exercise, lived more in the air, washed more in cold water, and eat fewer sweetmeats. He affirmed that whatever harm there was, came from the liver and the mucous membrane, and that the patient's absurd mode of life was answerable for the whole. But then this young man, Doctor Javal by name, was of a hard and unkind nature, and did not sympathise readily with people who complained overmuch.

It is certain that Monsieur Richard's mode of living was unwholesome, but that struck no one else, for it always has been a theory in France,—in the provinces above all,—that the amount of pampering a man enjoys should be measured only by the power of paying for that whereby you are to be pampered. Therefore, Monsieur Richard, being rich, was quite right to indulge himself in every possible way,—as he did. The atmosphere he kept up in his room was that of a forcing-house, and when he went out of doors he muffled himself up into a permanent state of perspiration. He had ordered down a neat little brougham from Tours, and drove about with shut windows and a foot-warmer,—never walking save on the brightest, warmest days, and for very short distances. Warm baths he allowed himself with the approbation of the old doctor at D——, who was for ever vaunting their “cooling and calming action !” And sweetmeats he indulged in to a degree that met with the approbation of no one at all,—not even of Madame Jean, who had to make them. Altogether the winter had severely tried Monsieur Richard, and his appearance was unhealthy, as he would sit shivering over the fire in the salon of the Château, where the inmates never attained beyond a very moderate degree of warmth.

With all this, his impatience to be in the full enjoyment of his riches seemed daily to increase in ardour. He was fretful with desire to see the house at Châteaubréville fit to be inhabited, and would sometimes avow to Mademoiselle Félicie that he counted the days and hours till he should have entered upon his new duties as head of one of the principal establishments in the department. Curiously enough, by degrees, as the state of his health became less satisfactory, fortune appeared intent upon favouring him more. An enterprise in which his uncle had invested a considerable sum, full fifteen years ago, a copper mine in Chili, and which had been supposed to be an unlucky venture, suddenly turned up a prize, and Monsieur Richard found himself, from day to day, far richer than he thought. It was evident now that he would enter upon his proprietorship of Châteaubréville without having to deduct from his capital the amount that the improvements there would have cost. Well, Monsieur Richard was a lucky man ! Only it was just at this identical moment that his health gave symptoms of the greatest weakness.

“Compensation !” said the public of D——; and perhaps it was so. Perhaps it would not have been just if, in addition to his extraordinary good luck in every other respect, Monsieur Richard had had the robust health and solid nervous system of some others who have their livelihood to earn. It is a just dispensation of Providence that the possession of great joys and the power of enjoying them seldom go together ; it consoles those who have only the capacity for enjoyment without anything to enjoy, and prevents them from cutting their neighbours' throats, or their own.

But what would most have surprised any English observer, had

he had occasion to examine minutely the feelings of the various persons we have introduced to him, would have been to notice the comparative absence of what is usually called "feeling" in any one of them.

Here was a father about to see one of his daughters take the gravest step that ever is taken in a woman's life; here was a girl under twenty about to assume upon herself the responsibilities of wedlock; and here was a man about to give all his worldly advantages for the privilege of calling this girl his;—yet in all this, where was the love;—where the sentiment, compared to which everything else is as nothing?

Monsieur de Vêrancour, amongst all the objections he saw to Félicie's marriage with Richard Prévost, never adverted to the possible existence of a moral one; never so much as asked himself whether she would be happy with this man, or whether she could be pure and worthy and good;—whether, at the end of a few years of such a union the immortal part of her would be better, nobler than now, or weakened and debased? He simply did not think of anything of the kind, because no one that he ever heard of was in the habit of so doing, and because his duty was merely to place, to establish his children;—having done which, he was entitled to hold up his hands to the Almighty, like Simeon, and chaunt his *Nunc Dimittis* in all confidence. Monsieur de Vêrancour was, as times go, a very excellent father; and no one in their senses would dream of demanding from him an iota more than what he was doing.

And Félicie?

Félicie was, according to the worldly morals of France, a thoroughly right-minded person,—a person upon whom you could count. This means that all the figures you take the trouble to cast up in relation to her would be found correct; all the calculations you make would be unerring, because you never would have to fear one of those perturbations which are brought about by the ill-regulated, comet-like vagaries of a sentiment. Félicie was reliable. I will not speculate upon what a lover or even a friend might wish, but depend upon it there is not in all France a father or mother who would not be full of pride and delight if heaven sent them only such a daughter as Félicie de Vêrancour.

As to Monsieur Richard, the future bridegroom of the fascinating Félicie, his nature was too thoroughly feeble a one to bear the strong tree of love; but he was possessed by an unceasing desire to call the girl his, and only refrained from manifesting it because his instinct told him that such a manifestation would be prejudicial to his interests.

One person alone, in this assemblage of eminently reasonable individuals, was unlike the rest, and that person was Vêvette. She was a stray flower in this garden of pot-herbs, a wild rose upon the wall destined only to foster fruit. Such being the nature of her character

and life, Vêvette was not regarded by those around her as altogether safe; and, if she had not been such a very child, she would have been narrowly watched, and made to undergo a due and proper course of training. It was tacitly understood between the Vicomte and his eldest daughter that whenever the latter became Madame de Châteaubréville, and was the sovereign mistress of her magnificent household, she should take her younger sister to live with her, and do the best she could for her advancement in life. Vêvette's "turn," as she had practically expressed it, would then come, and neither Félicie nor her father had the slightest doubt of how exemplary it would be on their parts to contrive that that "turn" should be an advantageous one.

The whole of poor little Vêvette's life had been of a kind to mislead her in all her appreciations of herself and of others. She had lost her mother too young to have seen, from her example, how perfect a merely loving woman, aiming at nothing loftier, could be; and she was far too humble to imagine that whatever instinctive sentiment she possessed could be otherwise than blameable. Of course, her convent education had been for her, with her peculiar disposition towards timidity and diffidence, the worst possible education. Convent discipline, the most enlightened as well as the worst, can seldom or never be good for any save the haughty and rebellious in spirit, whom it does sometimes modify, and to whom it teaches worldly wisdom as well as the justice of concession. To the naturally meek and humble, convent discipline is simply destruction. It roots up self-reliance and preaches dependence as a virtue, and you may pretty surely predict of a convent favourite that her notions of right and wrong are not innate, but imposed upon her from without.

Now, although poor little Vêvette's nature was too sweet and pure a one to be spoilt by all these mistakes of education, her peace of mind was destroyed by them, and her simplicity of heart perturbed. Whilst in reality all her own native instincts were towards the fair and the noble and the generous, she was driven into being perpetually at war with herself, and into believing that whatever she thought, or wished, or did, must be wrong. On all sides she had heard her sister lauded as the pattern of everything a woman should be, and her own inmost soul, when questioned, told her she could not be like Félicie.

It was one of the causes of her love for Raoul, that, recognising as he did the beauty of her nature, he gave her—whether she would or not—a kind of trust in herself. The great cause of the love, however, was the impossibility of avoiding it. They were left to themselves, and they loved, just as it was natural they should do. But this was precisely one of poor Vêvette's greatest troubles. From the same source whence she had drawn her piety, her faith in all divine truths, from that same source flowed a doctrine which condemned her to be incessantly at war with herself. That nature was to be

vanquished, and that all Love was a sin;—this was the doctrine of her teachers. And what was she to do with such teaching as this?

Instead of loving frankly and gladly, and hopefully and strongly, and finding virtue in the truth of devotion, the poor child struggled against what was best and noblest in herself, and though with her whole heart she loved Raoul, the innocence of the passion was overcast, and she was doomed to the torture of an unquiet conscience, and to what was worse still, the knowledge that far from bringing happiness to him she best loved, she, by her own uncertainties and alarms, brought him perpetual perplexity and pain.

But in this little out-of-the-way town of D——, events were in store which threatened to force the persons we have been attempting to describe out of their conventional parts into the real characters which had been allotted to them in the grave and serious drama of life.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BRIDE.

As the domain of Châteaubréville lay at the other side of the department, to the north-east, if you went from D—— by the road, it was a good half-day's work to get there. The usual manner of performing the journey was to drive over to one of the railway stations on the banks of the Loire, and from thence proceed by rail to the post town nearest to the château itself, whence a vehicle could be despatched to meet you.

This was Monsieur Richard's mode of proceeding, and it had now become his habit, when he went over to inspect his future residence, to pass one night always, and occasionally two or three, at the château. It took four hours of tolerably good driving, with a rest of half-an-hour at the half-way auberge, to get from D—— to the station, and another good hour and a half were required before landing you at the hall door of Châteaubréville. The expedition, therefore, was not possible in the short days of winter. But Monsieur Richard was growing very anxious that his future wife should give her opinion upon some of the interior arrangements of what was to be her home, and his anxiety would, if he had dared, have been tiresome; as it was, it was only fidgety, and he was for ever recurring to his fear lest too much delay would be engendered by the want of certain details being positively fixed upon. March was drawing to an end, and the weather had, for the last ten days, been singularly fine, the genial warmth of the sun bringing forth vegetation in what was an exceptional manner even for the soft climate of western France.

It was decided to take a journey to Monsieur Richard's new estate, but to take it in a form that should not awaken the curiosity of the inhabitants of D——. Monsieur Richard himself was to go over to

Châteaubréville the day before, pass the night there, and prepare everything for the reception of the Vicomte and his daughters on the morrow. The remarkable old conveyance which, in the days of the Restoration, had been a calèche, drawn by two stout percherons, was ordered out, and Baptiste, in his time-worn livery, prepared to get all the work he could out of the one aged horse which on such like occasions had the honour of transporting the Vêrancour equipage of state from place to place.

Why his master and his family were going early in the morning to the N—— station Baptiste did not guess, which was no wonder, seeing that Baptiste was not bright; but the lynx-eyed Suzette, his better half, did not guess it either, which was wonderful. So the Vicomte and the two girls really did accomplish their journey without all the gossips in D—— knowing whither they were bent, and the general opinion was that they had gone to see the Mère Supérieure of a very famous convent on the Nantes Line, in order to arrange for the noviciate of Mademoiselle Vêvette, who was all but certain one day to take the veil.

The N—— station was reached, the down train duly caught, and the party safely set down at the village where Monsieur Richard was to be found in waiting. And there he was sure enough, and all four packed themselves into the vehicle he had brought for their convenience; and the big, finely gilt clock just over the vestibule door was striking one when they got out at what was one day to be Félicie's future home.

The few hours allotted to the visitors—they were forced to leave again at a little after five—were, as you will easily conceive, amply employed by all they had to see. Félicie proved herself thoroughly equal to the duties of her future position, and inspected everything as though she had all her life been the mistress of a large house, and reigned over a numerous establishment. Nothing was beyond or beneath her; nothing, in fact, out of her competency. She dived down into the kitchens, and soared up into the attics, authoritatively decreeing what was requisite for each individual servant as long as he or she was "in the exercise of their functions" for the master's benefit, and how little was sufficient for them when they were consigned to the privacy of their own rooms. She was brilliant on the subject of pantries, larders, and store-closets, and hit upon all the dry corners in which it was best to keep provisions and linen; and in the wash-houses absolute inspiration visited her, and she overturned all the plans which had been adopted for heating the caldrons, substituting for them others which were, as she victoriously showed, far more economical. The architect who had been appointed to meet them, and who knew nothing of the names of the persons with whom he spoke, was penetrated with admiration of the wise and omniscient Félicie, and could not help repeating at every fresh defeat of his com-

binations by her suggestions—"Voilà une petite dame bien entendue!"

Poor Vévette felt, as usual, thoroughly crushed into nothing by her sister's superiority. So did the Vicomte; but then he liked it, which Vévette did not. No true woman can bear to think of herself as femininely inferior, that is, inferior in those qualities which constitute a woman. The decision and practical ability of Félicie overawed Vévette; and feeling that nothing could ever make her emulate her sister's virtues, she began to regard herself as useless, i.e., incapable of imparting happiness; and the inevitable consequence was discouragement and deep self-dissatisfaction. Poor Vévette! She resolutely admired Félicie because she had been told to do so from childhood upwards, but do what she would, she felt she could not like her ways.

This visit to Châteaubréville was a sore trial for Monsieur Richard, for almost all the arrangements to which he had been consenting for four months were disputed and in most cases changed. Of course, on the alterations made in the inside of the house Monsieur Richard had never given an opinion,—he had none,—but had allowed his architect to go his own way, and the architect had aimed chiefly at two things—filling his own pockets, and giving to the general aspect of the dwelling a sufficient air of richness. In neither of these aims did Mademoiselle Félicie at all acquiesce, and she made comparatively short work with the bourgeois-like splendour which was about to flaunt from every wall and window of the "renovated" old place.

"What on earth has made you think that the panels in this small drawing-room should be gilt?" asked she, smiling, but with at the same time an air of such exquisite impertinence that a spectator must have had a curious idea of what the husband's life would be who would daily endure such treatment. "What is the use of gilding here?"

"It is richer," replied both Monsieur Richard and his architect at once.

The elegant Félicie curled her lip, and used an inexpressibly disdainful accent whilst echoing the word "richer!" And she meant this as much for her own sire as for Monsieur Richard, for she could not avoid seeing that the Vicomte was every bit as unable to resist the temptation of what was gaudy as was his base-born son-in-law elect.

"Why, what would you furnish these salons with?" she continued, always imperturbably smiling, and looking so pretty! "Would you hang them with crimson damask?"

"Crimson damask is very handsome," observed the architect, rather abashed.

"Then what is to become of your beautiful old meuble in white wood, and Beauvais tapestry, which is absolutely priceless for any connoisseur?"

"Well," ventured to remark Monsieur Richard, "Monsieur and I thought of putting that into the rooms up-stairs, and——"

But she quickly cut him short, and laid her law of elegance down, which was manifestly to be without appeal. "No one but parvenus," said she, mercilessly, though in honey-sweet tones, "ever put gilding and silk or satin stuffs into country houses. Richness, or even pomp, is all very well for a Paris residence, and in your drawing-rooms in Paris you can be as lavish of gold and crimson damask, within a certain measure, as you choose; but freshness is the notion that ought to be inspired by the aspect of a country abode. Renovate, by all means, the old boiseries of these salons, but keep them what they are; wood, plain wood, white upon pearl grey, and no gold!—for Heaven's sake, no gold!"

Monsieur Richard looked utterly disappointed, and as if half his satisfaction in his wealth were taken from him. He pleaded for just a little "show," for here and there a patch of garish colouring or of costly material, and finding no other, he invariably made use of the same argument, and vaunted the richness of what he proposed. Against all the delicate-tinted, though perhaps a little faded, Beauvais and Gobelins furniture, which Mademoiselle de Verancour advocated, he opposed his brand new, gorgeous tissues, of which he lugged about a huge roll of patterns. "See how rich this is!" he repeatedly said.

"But it is bad in taste!" was the only answer he got, and this answer reduced him to silence. And so it was with everything. What he had thought fair or fitting was not discussed, or superseded by something fairer or more fitting; but the standard by which he could by any possibility judge of its fittingness or fairness was not explained to him. He was put from the starting-point out of the pale of whatsoever was connected with taste!

And I don't say that, from the artistic point of view, Mademoiselle Félicie was wrong, for I am tolerably certain that no teaching and no change of habits could ever have given Richard Prévost the fine perceptions that are requisite to be able to judge the beauty of external objects, just as probably no mere circumstance would have ever destroyed them in Félicie. But it was a hard case, for here were this man and this woman about to enter upon a compact to exist side by side during the term of their natural lives, without one single point in their respective modes of life being otherwise than calculated to keep them morally asunder.

They went through the house, up-stairs and down-stairs, and every step made it evident how perfectly at home Félicie would be in this fine old mansion when she came to be its mistress, and how no amount of mastership would ever make of Richard Prévost anything else save an intruder. But though each, perhaps, may have instinctively felt this, neither saw in it anything which appeared like a warning, and the man was as ready as before to buy the wife who

would despise him, and the wife equally ready to accept the husband with whom while she lived she could never have one single moment's community of thought.

They rambled through the gardens and shrubberies, and visited greenhouses and poultry-yards and stables, and here, as indoors, the captivating Félicie promulgated her dogmas, and put out of the question all attempt at a retort or a counter-objection by the fatal sentence: "It is not the proper thing," or "It is bad taste."

When the time came for going, Mademoiselle Félicie was well pleased with her expedition, and when she stepped into the vehicle which was to take them back to the station, she felt that upon the whole she had spent a pleasant day. Monsieur Richard could not make up his mind as to whether the day had been altogether a pleasant one to him, and for the first time since they had met, the future father and son-in-law cherished a sort of mutual sympathy; for they had been equally snubbed by the same person.

At the N—— station who should they meet but the Curé of D——, who had been sent for by the bishop, and was returning to his parish by a late train. They made him the offer of a fifth place in the venerable old calèche, which necessitated the pitiless squeezing together of the two young ladies, but thoroughly convinced Baptiste that the object of the journey had really been the convent at which Mademoiselle Vévette would one day take the veil.

It was striking seven when they started on their homeward course, but the old horse, eager for his stables, did his best, and Baptiste affirmed that they should reach D—— before the four hours usually required would be over. The night was a warm but windy one; fitful, as the finest nights in early spring are wont to be, and after the moon had silvered the whole road before them and the tall trees along its edge, her light would be suddenly eclipsed by the dusky veil of some swiftly drifting clouds. "We are going through your property here, are we not, Monsieur le Vicomte?" asked the Curé, as the carriage jolted out of a very ill-repaired by-way into a tolerably smooth road skirted by young woods.

"No, no; that's none of mine," was the reply. "I wish it were. Les Grandes Bruyères lie much higher up to the left. We have just come across old Rivière's fields, and at this moment we are entering on Monsieur Richard's woods."

"A valuable property," suggested the Curé.

"Humph!" grunted the Vicomte. "Yes, valuable enough, but atrociously ill kept, I must say."

"What can one do?" objected Monsieur Richard. "It would be the work of an active stout-bodied man to superintend the cuttings hereabouts. I know that, and old Prosper is assuredly not fit for the post; but if I were to turn him away what would become of the old fellow? He is already in a very shaky state of health."

"More than that even, Monsieur Richard," replied the Curé; "the man seems to me absolutely shattered; he is so wasted away as to be but the shadow of himself; and his temper is strangely gloomy."

"Have you seen him lately?" inquired Monsieur Richard eagerly.

"Not very lately,—and you?"

"Oh! I never see him," was the prompt rejoinder. "When he comes, he sees Madame Jean, or he goes to the notary."

"Poor old man!" said Vévette gently; "his must be a sad life up all alone there in his woods. Was he always quite alone in the world?"

"As long as I have known him, always," answered Monsieur Richard.

"Yes," added the Curé, "and as far as I know, he was always of the same unsociable disposition; a born solitaire, but, after his fashion, sincerely pious."

"Poor old man!" said Vévette again.

The carriage rolled and jolted on, and the third quarter past ten was just to be heard from the church belfry as it came upon the stones at the entrance into D——. "There ends my land," said Monsieur Richard, as he pointed to a steep wooded bank just outside the town which sloped down into the road. "Up that little path you can go on to the very top of the hill and past M. Rivière's new farm."

"And straight up to old Prosper's hut," added the Vicomte. "I know the road well, and take it often out shooting. There's somebody coming down it now;—just look! It never can be old Prosper at this hour." The moon at this moment was shining very brightly, and gave plainly to view the figure of a man coming out of the little winding path into the road. He was evidently about to cross it, but was stopped by the advance of the old horse that was trotting forwards under Baptiste's whip. He drew up and waited. The carriage passed, and as it did so the moonbeams fell full upon his face.

"Why, it's Raoul!" exclaimed Félicie.

"Nonsense!" said her father. "Raoul's in Paris doing his office work."

"Besides, what should he be about in the middle of the night on a lonely path leading only through my woods?" muttered Monsieur Richard. "I don't suppose he has conferences with Prosper up in his hut."

"I don't mind that," continued Félicie; "it was Raoul."

Vévette felt a shudder go through her whole being, without knowing what it was that affrighted her.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LITANIES FOR THE DEAD.

A few days went by, and it was found to have really been Raoul de Morville whom the Vêrancours had seen coming down into the road on the night of their return from Châteaubréville. But the way in which this was found out was rather strange, and did not leave a very satisfactory impression. Raoul had called upon the Vicomte, and stated that a sudden illness of his father's had summoned him from Paris, and that he had obtained a month's leave of absence from his office. Old Morville had had a kind of paralytic seizure, and was very weak and ailing; but no one in D—— had heard of this, for little or no intercourse was kept up between the inhabitants of the town and those of La Morvillière.

"When did you come, Raoul?" asked Félicie, carelessly.

"On Wednesday," was the answer.

"Why, Raoul," was the rejoinder, with a mocking smile, "you positively do not know what you are saying. You came on Tuesday, and you have been here four whole days without coming to see us. Oh! don't deny it, for we saw you on Tuesday night coming down into the road by the path leading from the woods. Surely you must have remarked us. You must have recognised Baptiste in the moonlight."

Raoul looked singularly annoyed and embarrassed, and at last ended by admitting that he had arrived on the Tuesday night, and that, not finding the D—— diligence at the station, he had come on foot, taking a short road across the hill and through the woods.

"Short road if you will, my lad," observed the Vicomte; "but it's a good fourteen miles' walk."

"And I really cannot think how you came not to see the carriage. The moon was quite bright just then," persisted Félicie.

"Well, I think I remember that I did see a carriage," replied young Morville; "but I certainly did not recognise the man who was driving it. I suppose I was thinking of something else."

"You must have been deeply absorbed in your thoughts then," exclaimed Félicie; "for Baptiste is not precisely a microscopical personage, and you have known him ever since he used to wheel us all together up and down the garden in his barrow."

Raoul was evidently uncomfortable, Félicie was malicious in her playfulness, and Vêvette was miserable, she neither knew why nor wherefore. The whole was unsatisfactory and odd. Every one thought so, but no one said it.

Vêvette felt that some harm threatened Raoul de Morville. What might be its nature, or whence it came, she knew not, but the instinct was as strong as it was sure; and from the moment in which this unmistakable touch of reality came upon her, all the fictions of her education flew to the winds. Raoul was in danger, and now she

knew how she loved him. What the danger was, what the harm that menaced him,—that she could not define; but in the dread of his having to pass through some hard and terrible suffering, everything else was lost to her sight. She did not stop to discuss whether it was wrong to love thus; she did not ask herself even whether she should ever be Raoul's wife; she simply felt that she would risk life, happiness, everything, sooner than that harm should come to him.

Raoul had avowed,—or rather he had not denied to her, on the last day when they met;—that he had some "trouble." What was it? How could she find out? How could she help him? Poor Vêvette's experience of life was as limited as that of a child, and all that she did know led her to suppose that no one had any grief unconnected with money. Since she was in existence she had always heard talk of money, and always been forced to conclude from what she heard that the aim of every one's life was to keep his own money and add to it that of other people. It is true she had been invariably taught that the mere possessors of wealth were to be despised, and that honour was due alone to good birth; but, at the same time, she had had it strongly borne in upon her that the well-born were somehow or other to be made rich, and that in their achievement of riches lay the perfect fitness of things.

Vêvette's mere judgment, then, told her that Raoul was probably suffering some grievous pecuniary embarrassment; but something beyond her judgment, higher than it, told her it was a peril of a graver kind that threatened him. She half determined to consult the Curé, but hesitated for many reasons, one of which was, that Monsieur le Curé himself was just then not so accessible as usual, but seemed to be almost out of temper, and to hold converse unwillingly with those who sought him. On the other hand, Raoul came but seldom to the Château, declaring that his father took up his whole time; and when he did come, Vêvette's stolen glances at him were met by looks so mournful in their lovingness, that misery and dread entered deeper and deeper into the poor child's heart. What could be impending?

The Curé had remarked that for many weeks the Breton woodcutter had neglected attending mass, and though it was not his custom either to note down those who remained away from church, or to think less well of them because they did so, still, the peculiar character of Prosper Morel, and his strong superstitious tendencies, made it strange that he should thus absent himself for a continued length of time from all celebration of divine worship.

One morning in April Monsieur le Curé sallied forth after early mass, and took a turn through the market-place. It was market-day, and all the housekeepers of the town and its environs were busy haggling and clamouring over their bargains. Madame Jean was busier and more authoritative than any one else, for she had the countenance of military authority wherever she went, and woe betide any luckless

peasant woman who might attempt to gain, no matter how little, upon the weight of what she sold, or prevaricate upon the freshness of eggs, butter, or poultry. She would have had to settle accounts with the Brigadier, who, on market days, was almost always to be seen in the near neighbourhood of Madame Jean, lending her an importance which neither she nor those about her disdained. But the sword yields precedence to the Church, and "Monsieur Frédéri" fell back respectfully when he saw Monsieur le Curé approaching Madame Jean.

"I wish you would tell me what you know of old Prosper Morel," were the first words addressed by the parish priest to Richard Pré-vost's housekeeper. "As far as I have remarked, he has been more than two months without coming to church; for him that is odd."

Madame Jean looked the Curé full in the face. "Two months!" echoed she; "why, saving your reverence, I don't believe he's put his foot there for—for—let me see," and she counted on her fingers, "one, two, three, four, five—yes, five," and then she mumbled, "March, February, January, December, November—five full months. I don't believe, Monsieur le Curé, that old Prosper has ever been inside the church since the day of the Feast for the Dead."

"Impossible!" retorted the Curé. "I'm quite certain I've seen him since then."

"So you may, but not in church. Seen him! Oh yes, so have I, too;—but how? Hulking and skulking about, crawling along close to the walls, and never speaking to mortal creature, but making off, if you see him, like an owl with the daylight let in upon him!"

"But Prosper is a good Christian," urged the Curé. "He never would stay away from church in that way."

Madame Jean turned up her nose, and sniffed the air with a look of something like indignation.

"Church, indeed!" she exclaimed. "Why, Monsieur le Curé, if one is to believe all one hears, the old savage—those bas Bretons are no better—has been and built himself some sort of a church or chapel of his own, where he keeps up a psalm-singing and a howling day and night, just as if he were a heretic, neither more nor less."

"Have you spoken to Monsieur Richard about him?" inquired the Curé very calmly, and in no wise allowing himself to be prejudiced.

"Well now, really, Monsieur le Curé," retorted Madame Jean, "where would be the good of speaking to Monsieur Richard? Primo, he's always for showing every indulgence towards old Prosper, under pretence that he was nursed by Prosper's wife; and, secundo, he don't get stronger or better able to bear worry than he used to be. He's very weak indeed, is Monsieur Richard, and nobody knows the trouble I have with him only to persuade him to eat a little wholesome soupe grasse, or a white of a chicken, and not to be always stuffing himself with sweets, creams, and jellies, and sugar-plums, that only turn on his stomach and make him sickly, and shivery, and

fractions, just like a baby! And that's what he is, poor Monsieur Richard; for all the world, just like a baby!"

While Madame Jean was delivering herself of this harangue, the Curé had been apparently communing with himself rather earnestly. With one hand shoved into the pocket of his soutane, he employed the other in shifting his black calotte about upon his big head, now bringing it down to his very nose, and then shoving it back to the nape of his neck. Then he suddenly fished up a blue checked cotton handkerchief from the depths of his pocket, blew his nose vigorously, put the kerchief back, rammed both hands into his pockets, said, "Bon jour, Madame Jean" rather abruptly, and marched off, across the Place, to the side street which led him up to his own dwelling.

A quarter of an hour later, Monsieur le Curé might be seen, with his broad-brimmed hat upon his head, and a good strong stick in his hand, walking over the stones to the spot where they cease at the entrance into the town of D——. The day was bright and warm, soft and sunny, and though it was only the first week in April, there was green everywhere,—that beautiful, delicate green through which the sun shines so pleasantly, and which is so suggestive of youth,—the youth of the year. When Monsieur le Curé got upon the high road, he suddenly turned to the left, and struck into the little path that led up the bank, and passed, as we have already been told, through Richard Prévost's woods. He walked on up the hill till at the top he reached a flat part of the country, divided between cornfields and woods; and skirting a field where the young wheat was just beginning to throw its verdant robe over the brown earth, he plunged completely into the shade of the woods, and made for the plantations of tall timber.

In the middle of a clearing, which our pedestrian soon reached, ten long and tolerably straight alleys met, and a board nailed to the stem of a beech-tree informed you that this was called "L'Etoile des dix routes." Between two of these forest avenues, and backed by thick towering woods, in which the axe had not been busy for some years, stood a solid, well-enough built woodman's hut. The door was well-hinged, and the window-panes unbroken. All looked to be in fairly good order. This was Prosper Morel's abode, and Monsieur le Curé went straight up to the door, knocked at it, and got no answer. He tried to open it. It was locked. He examined the two windows. The board serving as a shutter was up at both. Monsieur le Curé walked round and round, and called Prosper with a loud voice, but got no answer. All was still, and as Monsieur le Curé had had a good stout walk, and had left home before the hour at which he usually partook of his second breakfast, he felt hungry, and not undesirous of a little repose. He seated himself on the log of a felled tree, and took from his pocket a large slice of bread, a piece of cheese, and a book. When he had eaten the bread and cheese, he betook

himself to the book, and read, and rested himself for half an hour. At last he rose, and looked again on all sides, and called, but still no one came; and so Monsieur le Curé got up to go home, saying to himself, "I can make out nothing that looks like a chapel." He proceeded home leisurely and musingly, and every now and then stopping to take off his hat, and rub his hand over his forehead.

He had got more than half way upon his journey back to D—, when he heard what he supposed to be the call of one woodsman to another, or of a shepherd to his dog. He stopped and listened. It was very indistinct; but still he heard it again. It seemed to be a good way off, and to come from the part where the woods were thickest. At last he clearly made out that the direction he was taking led him nearer to the sound, and he pursued his path, listening, stopping, and then instinctively holding his breath, in order to listen better. The sound was an inexplicable one—something between a moan and a yell; and as the Curé got nearer, he perceived that it was, in fact, a succession of continuous sounds, and that when the louder cries ceased, they were exchanged for a rapid droning sort of utterance, which at first he could not rightly understand. The wood grew very thick as he advanced, and the path very narrow, winding through tangled brushwood and briars, and extremely damp under foot.

For a moment or two the sounds had ceased, but the Curé kept on his path cautiously, for fear of being heard. Through a break in the bushes he now saw a small open space where the grass grew high, and at one end of which had been raised a species of shed. It was a queer, rude kind of construction, thatched with straw, quite open as far as one half of it went, and the other half was rudely and imperfectly closed by very clumsily made hurdles. The Curé had hardly had time to render to himself an account of what he saw, when the chaunting recommenced.

It was the Litanies for the dead. The droned or muttered parts were the repeated appeals of the actual Litany, whilst the words "Libera me!" were shouted out with terror-stricken force, and with what was really sometimes a perfect yell.

At first the Curé could not see the man who chaunted the dismal invocation, for he was seemingly behind the shed, but a few seconds brought him to view. It was old Prosper Morel, who, with a crucifix in his hands, strode round and round the shed, at a solemn measured pace, and as though following the procession before Mass on All Souls' Day. The wood-cutter was so altered that he looked as though twenty years had passed over him. The flesh had apparently dried up, and only wrinkled skin covered the bony structure of the man. The joints seemed absolutely monstrous, and knees, ankles, shoulders, elbows, and wrists stood out in huge disproportion to the shrunk and dwindled portions of the frame they held together. The nose was a

very vulture's beak, rising between the two sharp protruding cheek-bones that literally overhung the hollow cavities where the cheeks had sunk in. But what struck you more than all were the eyes. Naturally enlarged by the shrinking of the flesh from the other features, their balls seemed starting from their sockets. But it was less the glare of the eyes that arrested your attention than their fixity. They appeared invariably to stare at some one object, and the lids did not look as though they could ever close over the eyes themselves.

What with his emaciation, and the patched and tattered condition of his raiment, Prosper was a grim object as he went stalking round and round, staring through space, with his crucifix clutched with both hands, close to his breast, and chaunting the Litanies for the dead.

The Curé resolved to watch minutely the movements of the man, and his whereabouts, before coming forward to make himself known. Accordingly, therefore, as the Breton went to this side or that, he, too, shifted his hiding-place, going from behind one large tree to another. What he saw was this ;—there, where the shed was open, there was visible inside it, and at the back, under the slope of the roof, a sort of chapel. Several large logs of wood piled up together, and covered with a sheet, made a kind of altar, and on this were grouped specimens of most of the things used in connection with the ceremonies of the Church. There were images of every description, large and small, in wood and in wax ; images of the Virgin and of our Saviour, and of various Saints. There were candlesticks of copper, brass, and tin, with tapers in them ; and hung all round there were pictures of Holy Families or Martyrs, such as you buy from peddlars and hawkers for a few sous.

The back of the shed was formed by a flat blank wall of planks coarsely nailed together and painted black, on which were drawn in white chalk a most confusing mass of hieroglyphical signs and figures, disjointed words, huge capital letters, verses of Psalms, and uncouth portraitures of human beings.

While the Curé was busy trying to make out what these extraordinary drawings could mean, the chaunting ceased, and in a few minutes the *bûcheron* came round with heavy, drawling steps, without his crucifix, but with something in his hand which the Curé could not distinguish. His eyes were still fixed on vacancy, and he was muttering a prayer half aloud. He walked straight up to the blackened wall, rubbed out a string of words and figures with his sleeve, and with what he held in his right hand began to write down others in their place. The operation was a slow one, but by degrees, as the Curé watched, he saw grow under the old man's fingers the phrase—

“ *De profundis clamavi* ”

Just then rang out clearly in the distance the chimes of the church

of D——, and the twelve strokes marking the hour of noon. This proved to Monsieur le Curé that he was nearer to the town than he had at first supposed.

He determined now to try the effect of personal communication, and stepping forward from behind the cover of his tree, he addressed the man. "Prosper Morel," said he, coming straight up to the bûcheron, "what is it you are doing here?" The old man sprang back with an agility you could not have imagined to belong to him, and then suddenly, as it were, collapsed altogether, and fell down at the root of a tall sycamore, huddled up, and with only his two arms stretched out to their utmost length, as though to ward off some attack. "Prosper," repeated the Curé, coming closer, but speaking very gently, "I have not come to harm you. Tell me why you are here?"

But, seemingly, speech was impossible, for the woodcutter only writhed and gibbered, and stretched out his hands against the intruder more and more. At last, by a violent effort, he raised himself against the trunk of the tree, and stood upright, glowering at the Curé, whose quiet persistence nevertheless appeared to be acting magnetically upon him.

After a few minutes' struggling, speech, though imperfect, came; and then, with a scream of terror, he spoke. "Master! master!" shrieked Prosper, "I won't go alone with you! Take him too;—take him!"

"Do you not know me, Prosper Morel?" asked the Curé, as he thought he perceived some sign of wavering in the man's eye.

"Yes! yes!" he gasped in agony, clasping his hands with convulsive energy. "Know you? yes. It is you who told him to come for me,—told me he would come, and look at me face to face,—but I won't go;"—and he threw his arms behind him fiercely, round the trunk of the tree;—"I won't go alone with him. Tell him to take the other too,—the other,—the other! Tell him to take him!" And then his hold relaxed, his knees knocked together, his body bent forwards, and he dropped senseless to the ground.

* * * * *

When Monsieur le Curé reached his home that afternoon he was no wiser than he had been when he left it. He felt that there was "something wrong" somewhere; but what seemed to him the most evident result of the whole was that, with his sermon on All Souls' Day, he had completely deranged the old woodcutter's already weak intellect.

But was Prosper only mad? or . . . ?

It was a terrible question, and Monsieur le Curé was sorely perplexed.

WHOM SHALL WE MAKE LEADER OF THE NEW HOUSE OF COMMONS?

WE place the question above asked at the head of this paper, thinking it to be more important than that other question—Who shall be the Prime Minister when the new House of Commons shall have met, and shall have shown its tendencies, its sympathies, and its intentions?

Since Lord Melbourne resigned in 1841, now something more than twenty-six years ago, the First Lord of the Treasury has, we believe, been a member of the Upper House of Parliament for about seven years, while a member of the Lower House has reigned for about nineteen years. And during those seven years in which the first servant of the Crown was a peer, it was generally felt throughout the country that the peer who held the office of Prime Minister was, in truth, the chief of his Cabinet hardly more than in name. In Lord Aberdeen's administration Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Gladstone, all sitting in the House of Commons, were the public servants whom the public most regarded. In each of Lord Derby's three Governments, he himself has been overshadowed by his Chancellor of the Exchequer; and when Lord John Russell,—than whom no Prime Minister had been more thoroughly Prime Minister when with that name he sat in the House of Commons,—became First Lord of the Treasury as Earl Russell in the House of Lords, Mr. Gladstone,—as we are sure Lord Russell would himself admit,—was recognised as the leading exponent of the political views of his party. That this has been so during the period named there can be no doubt; and looking at the tendencies which the forms of Government are taking in the country, it is, we think, clear that the same result must follow from any future combination of ministerial names. It may well be for the comfort of the Queen that she should entrust the formation of a ministry, in the interest either of the liberal or of the conservative party, to a member of the House of Peers. It may well be for the benefit of the country that, in this or in that emergency, the First Lord of the Treasury should sit in the Upper rather than in the Lower House. But let the so-named Prime Minister sit where he may, let titles and precedence in any ministry be arranged as the Crown and the ministers themselves may choose, the people of the country have now been taught to regard the Leader of the

House of Commons as the highest political personage of the day, and will so continue to regard him, until the present phase of parliamentary government shall have been altered by new ideas. For this reason it is more important to us to ask who will be the Leader of the new House of Commons when that House shall have met, than to inquire who may occupy the President's chair in future Downing Street assemblies.

And it is very important that the question should be asked now,—and that it should be answered now by those men who will have potential voices in placing this or that man in the foremost seat on the Treasury Bench, when the new House shall have been called together. Who will be the Leader for this present session of Parliament is a fact pretty well established. We do not attempt to prophesy whether Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli may hold their places till the autumn; but even should the circumstances of party warfare lead to their overthrow before the session be over, and should a liberal Minister be called upon to form a Government with the present House of Commons,—an event which few Liberals anticipate or even desire to witness,—the new initiation of a liberal policy by liberal political members of the House could hardly be accomplished till a House of Commons shall have been brought together which shall represent the new as well as the old constituents. Mr. Disraeli will of course lead the House now sitting, and we shall not regret to see him leading it till it die. But it is for the liberal party who now fill the left benches, to settle in this session, and to settle firmly, whom during the next session that party shall obey, should the Treasury Bench then be occupied by its representatives. The question is one which cannot be answered with advantage, which cannot even be asked without injury, when the services of the Leader are required for instant action. President Lincoln is reported to have said, when the dismissal of an unpopular Minister was demanded of him amidst the hottest turmoil of the Civil War, that it was bad to have to change one's horse in the middle of a rapid river. The position in which the liberal party would find itself, should its trust in its chief spokesman be unsettled, is not exactly that suggested by President Lincoln's illustration. When the hour of battle shall have come, there will be no suggestion to change the leader. There will be no direct proposal made to put down this man and to put up that. But there may arise, as heretofore there have arisen, political ideas in men's minds, untrue to policy, though honest enough in themselves, which will create on the one side lack of faith, and a propensity to disobedience, where submission and co-operation are a necessity; and on the other side, a stern refusal to conciliate where conciliation is a duty. When this occurs at the moment of action, the effect is the same as that of changing your horse in the mid-torrent. You are swept down while the little difficulty is being

overcome, and the strength of the man and of the steed, which would have been all-sufficient, are wasted in doing that which should never have been wanted to be done at such a moment,—and, even though wanted, should not have been attempted.

There are such difficulties before us;—or there may be. Let so much be conceded. That a great party should be brought together to act on various subjects,—on each of which every bettermost man of that party has a distinct opinion of his own,—to act on matters of the highest moment to the welfare of their country, and each with all the responsibility of self-action, and that there should be no divergence of ideas, no difference of opinion,—either as to the things which should be done, or as to the manner of doing them, is a supposition that no politician can entertain. And we all know that there are and always will be men in the House who proudly call themselves independents. Here and there is to be seen among the benches the “*Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri* ;” who proclaims that he will follow no leaders, that he will support or oppose this measure or that, simply as his own theories or instincts in matters political may dictate to him to do. That there should be some such men in the House is very good, and a few such men have been useful in their way. But we all know that nothing in politics can be carried by such men. Catholic emancipation, Reform, Repeal of the Corn Laws and Free Trade generally have not come from their endeavours. It is admitted that the practical man in the House of Commons must belong to a party. We have had no truly great or eminently useful man in the House, since the House has had an intelligible history, who has refused to submit himself to party bonds. It would be as well for a soldier or a regiment to propose to go out into the field during the battle, and to do a little fighting apart, still meaning that the fighting should be done for the national cause, as for a politician to suppose that he can carry his measure without concession to the views of others,—without fighting, that is, in his own cause, indeed, but in compliance with the tactics and strategy of the army by which the victory is to be won.

But there are difficulties. That the political servants of the Crown should obey their leaders is a thing of course. These are gentlemen who have so closely understood each other's ideas in politics, who have been so trained one by another, that without strain upon their feelings, they are able to act together as a compact body. Now and again, we hear of disruptions, but of disruptions only sufficient to prove as exceptions the truth of the rule. But the outer party is bound together by no tie which makes disruption the necessary consequence of disobedience. The ordinary member owes his closest allegiance to his constituents. It must therefore be with him a matter of judgment whether he will or will not act with his party on any subject. No doubt there are difficulties. How shall you

argue with a man that he is bound in conscience to give up the crotchet to which he finds that his conscience directs him? You can only convince him by teaching him that he can be of no use for effecting the great purposes which he has in view as a single stick, and that he can only be strong as one of a faggot.

"*Fas est et ab hoste doceri.*" Let us learn what may be done in party warfare from the Conservatives and from their leaders. When the Tory Gentlemen of England, our staunch old squires, have been taught such a lesson in party warfare as that which, on the authority of their great instructor himself, we are assured they have at length learned, surely we on the liberal side in politics need have no difficulty in submitting ourselves to our masters. There need be no ferule for us, and the yoke should be very easy. If a great party, in the cause of political warfare, can be led together to accomplish that which, as all men know, each individual of the party regarded as a thing abominable, antagonistic to his own instincts, odious to his own feelings, subversive of his own modes of thinking and of living, surely there should be no great obstacle, no invincible difficulty, in bringing the opposing party together for purposes which are dear to each individual, which are in accordance with his instincts, which suit his feelings, and which satisfy his modes of thought and of life? There may be a contest as to this or that word in a political proposition. One Liberal may differ from another as to time, or extent, in proposing a measure,—or even as to the manner of carrying it. But the liberal party may be consolidated without the learning of any lessons painful as those which have lately been administered; without swallowing any medicine bitter as that with which Mr. Disraeli has been compelled to purge the flock of which he is the shepherd.

The Conservatives have at least effected much,—so much, with so little of disruption, as to have sufficed for their purpose,—and they have done so because they were prepared with their leader. Whatever merits they have lacked, the merit of obedience has been theirs; and the history of the last session, and of the one preceding it, should teach us these two lessons;—that the best political party can do nothing unless there be unison between it and its leader, and that the worst political party may do almost anything if that unison exist. When we see the remnant of the fifty and odd country gentlemen, who bound themselves together in hopeless antagonism to the first advance of Free Trade, voting submissively for Household Suffrage, we should acknowledge ourselves ready to accept a lesson in political warfare from Mr. Disraeli and his followers. And then it is so pleasant to know that we may accept the lesson and suffer none of the humiliation. But the lesson must be accepted;—we must choose our leader now; we must prove that we are ready to follow him,—with so much of submission as a political leader has a right to demand,—if we intend that our party shall sit on the dominant

side of the House soon after the new Parliament shall have been assembled.

Our question, "Whom shall we make Leader of the new House of Commons?" refers to men and not to measures, and we are aware that measures and not men are supposed to be the objects of all honest politicians. What matters who is in Downing Street, or who sits on the Treasury Bench near the big box in the House of Commons, so long as the country gets the legislation that it wants, and has that legislation executed efficiently? Measures and not men are, no doubt, what we are all struggling to put forward. This of course is true;—but men are the means to measures, and to political measures they are the only means within the compass of the ordinary citizen's reach. And if this be true, it must be true also that nothing in politics can be effected under a free government without party submission and party fidelity. This is now acknowledged as a truth, as far as practice may be taken as an acknowledgment, in the government of every great existing kingdom in the earth, in the formation of which there is any attempt or pretence of attempt at constitutional form. In the United States, the great political battle of each term of four years is the election for the Presidency. It may be, latterly it generally has been the case, that the popular candidate has been a man comparatively unknown; but the candidature of that man has meant protection of slavery with increase of slave and state rights, or it has meant abolition of slavery, free soil states, and Federal power. The questions are now a little altered; but the manner and the intention is in nowise changed. By his vote and by his vote only can the democrat show himself to be a democrat, and assist in carrying democratic measures; or can the republican show himself as he is, and give his aid to republican views of government. It is the same in France. The man who prefers imperial rule votes for the Emperor's candidate. He who would prefer a more liberal form of government, if he be bold enough, gives his vote to the opposition. There is nothing else that he can do. Of course he wants measures, not men. But men are the means to measures,—and are as well known for the direction which they will take as are different trains on a railway. One does not find oneself carried to Manchester, if one gets into a carriage for Liverpool. The member of the House of Commons who chooses to support Mr. Disraeli, may indeed not quite know whither he may be taken ultimately, but he may be sure that he will be carried along on the good old conservative road, in good old conservative company.

As we hold it to be the duty of every Liberal in the country who possesses a vote, to give that vote to the liberal candidates who may contest the seat in which he is interested,—even though personal feelings should prompt another course,—so do we think that every liberal member in the House of Commons should, on all great party

questions, place his vote at the disposal of his leader. If that be the case, there can be no matter of greater import than the selection of a leader who is to be so trusted. And we think that the very foremost business of the House of Commons is to place the proper man on the first seat on the Treasury Bench,—a man who shall have the gifts of a statesman as well as those of a debater, and who, above all things, shall be in sympathy with the majority of his countrymen. The battle cannot be fought without a general, let the soldiers be ever so honest and ever so brave. Nor can a battle ever be won under a command divided among two or more. If it be hoped that liberal measures shall be carried by a liberal majority in the next House of Commons,—measures for the extension of education, suppression of the Irish Church, for the abolition of religious disqualification, and the like,—it must be decided, and decided plainly during the present session, who shall be the leader under whom the liberal party shall elect to win its victories.

That the passing of liberal measures into law should come from a preponderance of liberal members in the House of Commons would seem to be a truism so flat that it needs to be re-stated by no political writer. But the boasts which have been made by the conservative party, as to the carriage by them of one great reform after another,—and each in opposition to their own acknowledged modes of thinking,—make it necessary that the truth should be asserted over and over again, even though it be so clear when stated as to seem to require no asseveration. Nothing of liberal legislation can be or has been effected for the country but by strength on the liberal side of the House of Commons. The Tories conceded Catholic emancipation; but was Catholic emancipation due to the concession of the Duke of Wellington, or to the demand of Mr. O'Connell? The Tories, with so much of the cream skimmed off from their milk,—with a secession of fifty and odd of the staunchest members of their party,—carried the first great measure of Free Trade; but to whom do we owe the repeal of the Corn Laws;—to Sir Robert Peel, or to Mr. Cobden and the League? The Tories have produced for us household suffrage,—with another skimming, of but little cream, with their fifty and odd staunch men reduced to three; but from whence has that boon truly come to us; from the enthusiasm in the cause of Mr. Disraeli, or from the convictions of such men as Mr. Locke King, Mr. Baines, Mr. Bright, Lord Russell, and Mr. Gladstone? It is necessary that every liberal who desires to understand the history of the government of his country, and to know how things are done, how public opinion prevails, how legislation proceeds ever in the same course, doing something, though it be but little, for the improvement of the condition of the people,—it is necessary, we say, that every one interested in the politics of the day, should ask for himself and should answer for himself these questions. If this be

done, those boasts which the conservative leaders are prone to make will be understood and appreciated, and taken at their worth. We were told lately at Edinburgh, by Mr. Disraeli, that almost all legislation in the cause of liberalism had for years long past come from him or from his flock. He did not tell us then how bitter had been his own opposition to that great conservative leader of the House from whose wise concession to public opinion the first step of free trade in bread was made at the moment when it was most absolutely needed,—an opposition in which there was a venom to which our political contests, bitter as they often are, have for many years past seen nothing equal. Though he did not tell us this, he took to himself, and to the party whom he has educated, the credit for all those good things which have come to us since we first reformed our House of Commons, including those measures of Sir Robert Peel's which produced from him such torrents of sarcasm. This boast was well answered the other day by Mr. Gladstone at Ormskirk; but it cannot be too often pointed out that whether liberal measures are passed under a conservative or under a liberal leader of the House of Commons, such measures will never be passed, or even heard of, but by the operation of that liberal party in the House which is the mouthpiece of the public opinion of the country.

The ordinary tactics of our party warfare make it natural that much of our legislation in favour of the liberal cause should come to us at last from the hands of conservative statesmen. Our system of representation is so devised,—is still so devised, though two Reform Bills have been at work upon it,—that the popular expression of political feeling in the country cannot do more than carry a bare majority of members into the House of Commons. The fact that boroughs, such as Calne and Wilton, are still called upon to furnish a third of the number of members returned by the Manchesters and Liverpools,—that is, we may say roundly, that 3,000 persons in a small town are politically equal to 100,000 in a large town, with a similar arrangement in reference to such counties as Rutland and Westmoreland, as compared with the different divisions of Yorkshire and Lancashire,—this fact will still produce the nearly even balance of political power of which we speak. And we should be sorry to see this balance roughly destroyed. That there should be a majority of liberal members in the House is to be ardently desired,—and as ardently is it to be desired that every fair step should be taken to extract liberal members from constituencies which have not hitherto been so generous and beneficent. But as the balance, always showing a turn in favour of the liberal party, has never hitherto tilted their opponents into the air, the battle has still been carried on with something of a chance of victory for the conservatives. If victory as to measures could not be obtained, personal ascendancy might be won. Catholic emancipation, Free Trade, and Reform,

though absolutely antagonistic to the very essence of Toryism and odious to the Tory soul, might be caused by Tory partisans. And, then, they could so much easier be carried by Tories than by Liberals, in any House of Commons that was nearly balanced. A liberal leader of the House, proposing Reform, would surely have against him every member of the Tory party. Without a blush, without a question to his feelings, without a qualm of conscience, the Conservative could oppose any measure of Reform introduced by a Liberal to the House. Let there only be some small gathering of fractious, undisciplined, self-opiniated men on the liberal side, to help the opposition, and the battle is won! Then there takes place the usual change. The gentlemen from the left of the Speaker go in triumph to the right; and the gentlemen from the right walk down to the left. But the gentlemen so placed on the right can only remain on the right by adopting the policy of their opponents. There may be battles in the House; but no one dreams of fighting against public opinion. The cause becomes triumphant in the hands of a Conservative, because the Liberal cannot vote against it, without a qualm of conscience, without a question to his feelings, or without a blush.

And so the country gains its measure. That which is desired to be law becomes law. There are many who will say that this should be sufficient, and that as long as this can be done no good citizen need trouble himself about the occupants of the Treasury Bench. If we are sure of the legislation that we want, what matters it from whence it comes? If this be so, may we not then at any rate say, that measures will suffice, irrespective of men? We hold, however, that nothing will so curtail, so retard, so deaden the progress of liberal legislation as such a conviction in men's mind as this. One may get oneself drawn up a hill by an idle horse,—even by a jibbing horse after much delay; but one would prefer to face the ascent with a spirited steed, willing for the work, and anxious to be at the top as we are anxious ourselves. It is true that we get liberal legislation from statesmen who are adverse to everything liberal in politics. Public opinion is good for so much;—public opinion, joined to that natural love for a share of political power, pay, and patronage which warms the bosom of every public politician. But we get it slowly, in dribblets, without a heart, and with suspicion in our minds when we are taking it. We fear the gifts that come from Greeks. Even now, does not almost every Reformer think that Mr. Disraeli will be found to have been too many for him, and that there has been something so ingenious in his manipulation of household suffrage, that votes will be forthcoming from it, which will send us back for a quarter of a century into the darkness of patriarchal politics? We confess that we do not ourselves share these fears. We think that we have really extracted much of that which we desire, even from a Parliament governed by Mr. Disraeli.

But Reform from the Conservatives is neither so sweet nor so safe to us, as it would have been from the hands of our own old tried and well-loved friends.

And even if we get the thing surely, we get it very slowly. A session of liberal progress under conservative leaders can be the result only of many sessions under liberal leaders. Is there any one who believes that Lord Derby's Government would have given us Reform, had not the absolute necessity of such a surrender on Lord Derby's part been forced upon him by the known determination of a majority in the House of Commons? The truth in that matter is so notorious that any speculation on it would be idle, were it not so necessary to keep ever present in our minds the way in which these things are done. And if we are to have liberal legislation from Tory statesmen, in their own teeth as it were,—if we are to have it from that source because we can get it thus, and only thus,—it follows that even for this purpose we must have our ranks well serried and well led, or else the compelling power will be wanting. If three,—shall we say three?—sessions of liberal ascendancy in the House be needed, to obtain one session of surrender from the hands of ascendant Tories, let us at least secure those three sessions that are so vital to us. And surely all true Liberals would wish to go beyond this. It is not well to be a honey-making bee in order that drones may reap the credit of one's industry. Better, even so, be the bee than the drone; but one would prefer to have one's title acknowledged. We are bound to confess that the late failure, nay the frequent failure of liberal bees to obtain their just recompense has come from mutiny in the hive. There has not been enough of sympathy between the Queen bee and her army.

If then it be desirable that in our new House of Commons the liberal party shall be enabled to carry liberal measures from the dominant side of the Speaker's chair, it is essential that, when the moment comes, the liberal party shall be ready with its Leader. And who shall that Leader be? We need, at any rate, not feel any squeamishness in declaring that it will not be Mr. Disraeli;—and we hardly need feel more in declaring that the only possible present leader of such a party is Mr. Gladstone. A leader without faults,—faults in the eyes of some,—it is impossible to conceive. That Mr. Gladstone may have faults,—faults which are faults in the eyes of the best of his own party,—we may acknowledge. But he has virtues, which we can all trust,—truth, honesty, genius, knowledge, a ready tongue, patriotism, and self-reliance.

We think we shall be held to be right if we limit the present number of possible leaders of the House of Commons to five. Mr. Disraeli is a possible leader;—but of him as such we need only say that he is certainly not the general by whom the liberal party desires to be led. Lord Stanley is a possible leader;—and were it probable

that his father should retire altogether from politics, it is not unlikely that Lord Stanley should bid for the leadership of the Liberals in the House of Commons. We are compelled to admire the position which Lord Stanley has taken in politics. The combination which he has shown of fidelity to his father, to his country, and to his own political character, have proved him to be a steadfast man,—and he has, moreover, been a good public servant. But we should much lament to see the liberal party in his hands. He has not borne the brunt of the fight;—and, were it for nothing else, the undoubted fact that they who have borne the heat of the action could not endure to be so topped, would make us fear to see such rivalry. But at present there can be no question of such rivalry. We trust that the election of another man may be made sure before Lord Stanley's chance of competing for the position may occur. And then Lord Cranbourne is a possible leader of the House. Should he remain where he is,—that is, should he not have been called to the House of Lords,—by the time that the Tory party shall have rehabilitated itself, he would, we may almost say undoubtedly, become its leader. And there are few who would not be rejoiced to see so honest, so diligent, and so capable a statesman as is Lord Cranbourne in that position. For the very success of a liberal party, a conservative party is needed. And that the conservative party should have its innings, now and again,—so that they be not too much prolonged,—no Liberal feels to be a sorrow. Should it become Lord Cranbourne's destiny to sit opposite to the official box, we shall not grudge him that honour; but when we are looking for a leader for ourselves, Lord Cranbourne cannot be the man. The fourth in our short list is Mr. Bright. When we venture to make such a list it is impossible to omit the name of Mr. Bright, though there are probably but few politicians who think it probable that he should ever be the first servant of the Crown, and though,—as far as we can judge,—he himself would not be found among those few. Nevertheless his position in the House and in the country has been so marked, he is so manifestly a leading man in politics, his power as an orator and as a debater is so great, that we should not be justified in denying that he might aspire to lead the House of Commons as the Queen's Minister, without arrogance or undue ambition. As we think that he would fail, and as we would regret much to see his failure, we will, at any rate, hope that the attempt may not be made. There remains to us Mr. Gladstone.

We have named in the above list three whom we regard as Liberals; and perhaps we may venture, before we proceed to urge further Mr. Gladstone's claim, to explain in a very few words what we conceive to be the difference between a liberal and a conservative politician. We are very far from conceiving that all conservative politicians are ogres desirous of fattening themselves on the blood of the innocent. We believe them, as a rule, to be as truly patriotic in their desires,—as

truly, according to their lights, as are the Liberals. We may feel hot anger, now and again, in regard to some special Tory,—not on account of his Toryism, but because he is so urgent in his attempts to make us believe that he is not a Tory. Taking them as a party, however, we admit that each individual member of it is probably as honest and as patriotic as are the individual members of the party opposite. But we regard the difference between them as being as clearly marked as is that in colour between a black man and a white man. The two regard the whole human race from a different point of view, and approach all questions of the government of men with theories of governing totally at variance. It is the object of Tories to maintain the inequalities between various ranks of men, as though such inequality was in itself a thing good. It is the object of Liberals to lessen these inequalities, believing such inequality to be in itself a thing bad. We are aware that the danger of making such a statement is this,—that it enables an opponent to accuse us of advocating that theory of an immediate proclaimed Equality in which French republicans used to rejoice. We declare that we are as far from doing so as can be any staunchest stickler for old rights. But at the same time we venture to think that the ultimate use of all legislation should be to help those below to come up somewhat nearer to those who are above them. The politics of the Tory are patriarchal. To him it appears to be almost an ordinance of God that society should be composed of a squire in a big house, with a parson below him, with four farmers in a parish, and with a proportion of peasantry living in cottages. This being the order of things which he finds, the Tory thinks that it is perfect. He is hospitable to the parson, just and affable to the farmers, and benevolent to the peasants. But to him, and to those who put faith in him, it appears that this is an order of things so good that it should remain, with its relative distances and differences, as an institution for ever. To him the superiority of his squiredom is a thing as sacred, as surely true and begotten of God, as was the divine right of the throne to the former kings of England. In that belief we find the patriarchal, or Tory, scheme of politics. The theory of the Liberal is the reverse of this, is anti-patriarchal, or what we may perhaps best call constitutional. Let the squire keep his acres, and the parson his living, and the farmer his farm; let the merchant keep his counting-house, and the manufacturer his mill; but let all legislation go to reduce the existing inequalities between man and man;—let the man below be assisted to tread on the heels of the man above him, rather than deterred from doing so;—that thus by degrees there may be none who cannot read, none who cannot learn what it is to be civilised. The Tory would always wish to be bountiful to those below him; whereas the Liberal would fain give nothing in bounty, but would enable him who wants to earn all in justice.

We have said that there are three possible politicians in the House of Commons who might be elected to lead a liberal party, entertaining generally views such as those which we have attempted to describe; and we have shown why we think that two of them are, at any rate for the present, out of the question. There remains to us Mr. Gladstone, and it becomes the duty of the party to inquire,—and it is indeed the duty of every individual member of the party who has the privilege of a seat in the House,—whether he be fit to be trusted with the great power needed for the position.

Has Mr. Gladstone shown himself to be true in politics,—true to his party and true to his country? Has he been honest? Is he an efficient statesman? Is he generally capable? Can he command the attention of the House? Has he won the respect of men;—for in this there is very much? And can he conciliate men;—for in this there is much also?

As regards Mr. Gladstone's sincerity in politics, we think that no man on any side entertains a doubt of it. The very changes which he has made are the proof of his sincerity. As he has continued to study the great matter of the governing of a country, he has gone round what we may perhaps call a quarter of the circle, advancing,—or retrograding, if there be any who choose to say so,—from liberal conservatism, to conservative liberalism. Year by year, and almost month by month, his countrymen have watched these changes as they have been made; and there has been not even an enemy who has ventured to think that aught but the convictions of a studious and just mind have produced them. We can all admire, after a fashion, the steadfast consistency of the politician who in early youth assumes a side which then is probably dictated to him by circumstances, who adheres always to the political ideas which were then instilled into him, and who dies by them. But such a one has not often the opportunity of giving proof of much earnest thought on the matter. His sincerity is not passed through the fire, as is that of the man who by slow degrees, with the eyes of his countrymen upon him, teaches himself those political lessons which he finds it necessary that he should learn in the service of his country. Of Mr. Gladstone's truth to his party and to his country we do not think that any liberal, or any conservative, member of the House of Commons, will have a doubt. And then as to his honesty? A politician may be true to his party, true after a fashion to his country,—and yet not be honest. Examples very conspicuous might be given of such lack of honesty joined to patriotism and to party zeal; but it would be invidious and unnecessary here to name such a one. They who do evil in politics that good may come of it, who mislead by false answers, who are crafty when skill only is required, who show a half and call it a whole, who descend to the intrigues of politics, and win their way by bamboozling friends, rather than by conquering foes,—such men we

call dishonest politicians. And we feel sure that, from year to year, as the mind of the country becomes clear in the matter, such guile will become less and ever less efficient for its intended purposes. We do not ever remember to have heard accusation of such dishonesty made against Mr. Gladstone. It will, we think, be admitted on all sides, that he has never descended to the wiliness of politics. It is hard, indeed, for a Minister to escape altogether the taint of such fault; and it has come partly perhaps from the nature of the ministerial position which he has held, that he has been able to exempt himself from even suspicion on such a charge. As regards efficiency in statesmanship and general capacity for public business, the liberal party may boast that in Mr. Gladstone it will have a leader as to whom there need be no doubt. That he is a real financier, the various budgets which he has produced for the country, and the recognised soundness of his views as to revenue, bear ample testimony. Now that M. Fould has been lost to France, Europe probably has not his equal. The expression of the opinion of that class of the public whom we call city men, has been on this head so plain as to leave the question among those that have been answered beyond a cavil. We all understand how essential it is that the Minister who leads either party in the House should be able so to address the House as to command its attention. Among the eloquent he should, if possible, be most eloquent; among those of ready tongue, he should have the readiest. He should be gifted with all the amenities of speech;—and the acerbities, the sharpnesses, and severities of speech should also be within his reach. It would be loss of labour to argue on this head respecting one from whose tongue speech flows sweeter than honey, and who can at a moment's notice imbue his words with all the bitterness of gall. In this respect, if fault there be, it is in the redundant fluency of the orator. Ready speech,—speech that shall be rational as well as ready,—which is so difficult to most of us, which is within the reach of hardly two or three among us without a strenuous effort, comes from him so like rills of water from a mountain, that they seem to count for nothing when they should count for much. At any rate we need not fear that speech should fail him, or that they who sit around him should fail to listen. As for that respect of men which should certainly, in these days, belong to him who is to be a leader in politics among us, it is never given in this country with a niggard hand to those among us in whose intellect and general honesty of purpose the country believes. It may be lost by very palpable immorality. It may be sacrificed to egregious covetousness. It may be diminished by buffoonery and a too-ready habit either of jest or of sarcasm. At present there is hardly a leading politician among us whose name and person are not held in high respect in the House to which he belongs. Lord Derby, Lord Russell, Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Bright, Lord Stanley, Lord Cran-

bourne, are thoroughly respected. It is felt to be an honour to know these men, and that feeling is reciprocated from one side of either House to the other. No one will venture to say that, in this respect, Mr. Gladstone holds a position inferior to the highest that is enjoyed by either of the statesmen above-named.

There is one other question which we have ventured to ask of the man who, after all, must be the leader of the liberal party in the new House of Commons, if any purpose, any efficacy, any action is to be expected from it. Can he conciliate men? We, perhaps, should not exaggerate the importance of this question if we were to say that upon the true answer to it depends the success or the non-success of the Government in England for the next ten years. There is one man, endowed with all the gifts which God can give, trained to the very purpose by study and thought as perhaps no other man was ever trained, with the reins in his hand, and every muscle, every finger capacitated by habit to manipulate them without an effort, with the position so completely attained, so honestly and entirely won, that none other can possibly fill it;—and all may be lost, because he cannot assume that urbanity towards his friends, that smiling, meaningless, yet all-powerful courtesy, that tone of equality among party comrades who doubtless are not his equals, which have enabled men inferior to him in all other things to hold a grasp of political power which nothing could shake.

May we imagine that when Atlas bore the world, well knowing that he bore it all, he would have been impatient and have shaken his sides with wrath, had the little mountains round him assumed that they bore a share? Or shall we say that it is the ambition of a noble spirit to desire to do all by its own efforts? It seems to us that Atlas may bear the world, and the noble mind be satisfied, without offence to the little mountains or to the lesser spirits. We believe that in every form of government, let it be devised how it may, there must be one leading mind. In a despotism it must be so,—whether the power belong to the so-called Despot, or be deputed. In a republic under a President it must be so. In a parliamentary government it must be so;—with this advantage in the latter case, that the leading mind can be changed as soon as it ceases to satisfy the governed. We have already said, in the first words of the remarks which we are now venturing to make, that this leading mind, this Leader of politics in England, this Governor-in-Chief of the nation, must henceforth be found sitting in the first place on the Treasury Bench in the House of Commons. The man who is to sit there must, after some sort, be our Atlas. But he cannot sit there long, let his qualities for the place be what they may, unless he can, at any rate, seem to share his burden with the little mountains.

But there are duties on both sides; and we may say of the man who cannot bear something for the sake of his party, that he is a

politician who is not likely to be of much service to his country. It would now be difficult, and it is perhaps unnecessary, to unravel the entangled difficulties which caused the failures of the session of 1866. But whatever may have been the causes of that failure, they gave a triumph to the conservative party which among other evils has produced this greatest evil,—the passing of a Reform Bill that bears the impress of no reformer's mind. We have an act which the collective good sense of the House, working without guidance from any political leader, has saved from the monstrous errors with which it was first projected. But it has been felt already,—and will be felt for ever and told in history, how faulty have been the provisions and how great the omissions of this patchwork piece of legislation,—because it was made law, without the superintendence of any one guiding mind. To call it Mr. Disraeli's bill, would be as idle as to say that it came from Mr. Gladstone. The bill which, despite its faults, is a liberal bill, was passed by the liberal party, but was passed by that party without a leader. The fault in this case was more, we must say, with the party than with him who should have led it. It is useless, however, to look to what is past, except for the lesson that it gives. If this lesson can be read aright, it will be very useful both to those who should be led, and to him who must lead. There is no reason why the country should be indebted to conservative statesmen for the Downing Street and Treasury Bench portion of that liberal legislation which it needs ; but it must be so indebted, unless they who compose the liberal side of the House will consent to act in accordance with the statesman whom they shall have agreed to elect as their Leader.

ON SHOOTING.

THE day which introduces these pages to the reader's eye will also drop the curtain upon the English shooting season of 1867—68. From the second day of February until the twelfth day of the following August the feathered game of these islands will regain and enjoy unconscious immunity from those deadly missiles, which the breech-loaders of Purday and his multitudinous professional brethren drive with such accuracy and force through the spangled plumage of grouse, pheasant, and partridge. It seems, therefore, no inappropriate moment to canvass the effects produced by the almost universal abandonment among British sportsmen of guns loaded at the muzzle, and the adoption in their stead of guns loaded at the breech. This substitution of weapons has been, as our sporting readers are well aware, a slow and gradual process. Great and now acknowledged as is the superiority of the breech-loader over the muzzle-loader, it was found to be no easy matter to induce middle-aged and elderly sportsmen among us to abandon in a moment the detonating or percussion system with which the fame of Osbaldeston, Captain Ross, George Anson, Lord Huntingfield, and many other celebrated marksmen, both dead and living, is inseparably identified. No sudden disclosure of the inferiority of their weapon flashed conviction upon the minds of British sportsmen, and taught them, as the battle of Sadowa taught soldiers all over the world, that percussion-caps and muzzle-loaders were no less a thing of the past than flint and steel, or bows and arrows. But even if the merits of the breech-loader had been far more conspicuously manifest and incontrovertible than they are, nothing is more illustrative of the characteristic conservatism of our own upper classes than the tenacity with which they cling to the ancestral fashion of field-sports and country amusements which has been handed down to them from their grandsires. Nothing can now seem more improbable to us than that the percussion gun should have had any difficulty in uprooting and displacing the flint gun. And yet it would be easy to prove, from publications which appeared from forty-five to fifty years ago, that many of the best gunmakers and crack shots of that day continued for years to maintain the superiority of the flint gun over the detonator, and that Colonel Hawker, the most successful and authoritative writer upon guns and shooting that Great Britain has hitherto produced, seems to have retained a sneaking preference for flint and steel up to his dying day.

In connection with our investigation of the effects upon the diversi-

fied interests of shooting which are likely to result from the introduction of the breech-loader, we propose briefly to review the general condition and prospects of this popular English pastime. The pursuit and destruction of wild animals, whether feathered and biped, or furry and quadruped, has been in fashion among mankind from the earliest recorded times. But it has been reserved for Englishmen, since the introduction of fire-arms, to apply to a pursuit, which by every other nation, ancient and modern, has always been described under the generic name of "hunting," the narrower and more specific title of "Shooting." When Nimrod is described in the Book of Genesis as "a mighty hunter before the Lord," it is not to be presumed that he was in the habit of mounting his horse and careering across the hills and valleys of the land of Canaan in pursuit of deer, or wild boar, or any other quadruped. What may have been the game, and what the snares, or traps, or pitfalls, or projectiles by which its destruction was compassed in Asia some 2,200 years before the birth of our Lord, we must leave to Dr. William Smith, or to some scriptural "Old Shekarry," to investigate and determine. Again, when Xenophon enters into an elaborate description of hunting as it existed in his day, we must dismiss from our minds, as we read him, all recollection of the restricted signification which the word bears in these islands and among ourselves. The elevation of fox-hunting among us into a favourite and, as some maintain, into our most characteristic national pastime, has deprived English shooters of the right to call themselves hunters. For, when an Englishman announces that he is going out hunting, the words convey no other notion than that he is about to mount his horse and to repair to a meet of some fox-hounds which is to be held in his vicinity. But let an American, in Iowa, or Wisconsin, or Minnesota, announce that he is going out hunting, and the first question addressed to him will be whether he intends to pursue bear or deer, prairie-chicken or wild-fowl.

It has always appeared to us that this divorce between hunting and shooting has been very prejudicial to the true interests of the latter pursuit. No one can deny that the pride which manly and genuine sportsmen feel in their shooting achievements is enhanced in proportion as the game pursued is assimilated in its nature to the class of animals described by lawyers as *feræ naturæ*. The unlaborious pheasants are dependent for their existence upon artificial supplies of daily food, and the more they are made to approximate to the habits and nature of barn-yard fowls, the more rapidly will all pride and satisfaction in the numbers slaughtered be felt to diminish. The pheasant is, after all, an exotic or foreigner imported from China or Asia Minor to England by a factitious outlay of money, of which still more must be expended to keep him alive. Without carrying our prejudices against pheasant-shooting to a fanciful extent, it must, we think, be conceded that thorough sportsmen take, for the most part, greater pride and

pleasure in shooting partridges or grouse than in shooting pheasants. For, although upon a well-preserved manor or moor the partridges and grouse are accustomed to have grain, or damaged raisins, or some other kind of food served out to them periodically by the keeper's hand, there is in both these birds an inherent wildness which is indestructible, and forbids their domestication or reduction to such a state of tameness as is commonly found to exist among pheasants reared at Holkham, or Bradgate, or in other well-stocked English coverts. No one who has watched an experienced gamekeeper advancing into a covert of which he has long been the custodian, and spreading the shocks of grain along the ground for his pheasants to eat, can hope to persuade himself much longer that the bright-plumed Chinese or Asiatic fowl upon which he is about to exercise his skill as a marksman differs materially in nature from the Shanghai roosters which he has left behind him in the neighbouring farmyard. But let a stranger stand near to the spot on which partridges or grouse are habitually fed, and he will have occasion to observe that the natural shyness of the bird will forbid his feeding or drawing near to the ground upon which the encroacher stands.

That which has always been regarded as the great charm of shooting in the eyes of Mr. Daniel, the author of "*Rural Sports*," and of other old-fashioned sportsmen of his date and class, has been its approximation to hunting in this latter word's widest sense—that is to say, to the pursuit of wild birds and quadrupeds with a view to their destruction. It is impossible to read Mr. Daniel's pleasant volumes, or Colonel Hawker's "*Instructions to Young Sportsmen*," without discerning the attractions which sea-coast wild-fowl shooting possessed for both above all other kinds of sport. It may be safely asserted that no boy with any taste for field-sports ever saw Colonel Hawker's well-known picture, entitled "*Commencement of a Cripple-Chase, after firing Two Pounds of Shot into a Skein of Brent Goose, and Two Wild Swans*," without retaining a lively recollection of it until his dying hour. So natural is the taste for wild and adventurous shooting, which is innate in every man who is worthy of the name of man, and which it takes a long course of luxury, and of battue-shooting, and of hot luncheons among the brown fern, to finally eradicate! But there is no class of sportsmen in whom contempt and distaste for English battue-shooting are more sure to be found than in those who have tasted the delights of the wild shooting which Hindostan, and Asia Minor, and North America, and many other regions of the world, furnish in abundance. It is difficult for any one who has long been dependent upon his gun or rifle in a wild country for his daily supply of food, to understand what pleasure or satisfaction there can be in entering a covert plentifully stocked with birds and animals, all of them more or less tame, and in shooting down we know not how many hundred head of hares, pheasants, and rabbits

within three or four hours. "We have always looked upon these exhibitions with pain, and we conceive them totally opposed in principle to the real spirit of English sports. We never could comprehend a man's feelings in killing a quantity of game under such circumstances. Sport it certainly is not." These are the words of as genuine a sportsman as ever pulled trigger. Unfashionable as it may be to promulgate one word in deprecation of the taste for battue-shooting now growing up among young Englishmen of rank, we must confess that we never read the account of a wonderful day's shooting in Lord Stamford's, or any other nobleman's coverts, without regarding such records with pain and aversion. The creative and sustaining principle of genuine sport is to be found in the laborious uncertainty of rambling for hours over forest and moorland without knowing what wild bird or animal may rise or spring up before us. A woodcock or snipe, three or four brace of partridges or pheasants, half a dozen hares or rabbits, a couple of teal or wild-duck, picked up in a wild walk of this kind, outweigh, in our estimation, the value of a hundred pheasants or hares massacred in a battue. It is singular to observe how outrageously the French, when plagiarising, as is now their wont, our English pastimes, parody the worst features of their adopted sport. We have never read such a burlesque of an English battue as the account of the day's shooting given in November last by the Emperor Napoleon to the Emperor of Austria in the woods of Compiègne and Pierrefond. At eleven o'clock nineteen shooters arrived at the scene of action in a series of chais-à-banc. The Austrians were dressed in violet velvet, with precious stones for buttons. The nineteen shooters were divided into two parties—the Emperor's party, consisting of ten, and the other party of nine individuals. The beaters and loaders amounted in number to two hundred and fifty. The Emperor of Austria was armed with ten muzzle-loaders, which were loaded by six keepers, who came expressly from Vienna for the purpose. The Emperor Napoleon shot, as usual, with muzzle-loaders. Shooting commenced at easy eleven, and left off at sharp four. Within this time a total of 3,829 head were massacred, whereof 600 head fell before the Emperor of Austria's, and 402 head before the Emperor Napoleon's, guns. Out of the sum total killed, 1,978 were pheasants. Allowing time for lunch and other refreshments, it will be seen that in every sixty seconds rather more than fifteen head of game must have fallen. Shades of Daniel and Hawker! What would ye have said, when in the flesh, to such a day's shooting as this!

It is believed, however, by some, that inasmuch as it is absurd to call pheasants "*feræ naturæ*," and inasmuch as they have to be watched, fed, and prevented from straying at a heavy cost of money, some justification of the maintenance of the severe Game Laws which still exist among us is herein to be found. The current

of that which professes to be the most advanced and enlightened public opinion of the day sets strongly at present against the Game Laws, as being the most objectionable surviving remembrancers of feudal institutions which are still to be found in the midst of us. We shall not here attempt to argue out so vexed and wide-reaching a question as the advisability of retaining or modifying our existing Game Laws. Happily it is now generally conceded by the owners of land that rabbits are vermin, nor would there be much resistance among country gentlemen if a law similar to that which has recently been passed in France, and which declares them to be vermin, were to be promulgated in England. No one can pretend that the most scientific and expensive style of farming, such, for instance, as that which prevails in the Carse of Gowrie, is compatible with the existence of rabbits viewed as game, and subject only to be destroyed at the option or caprice of the landlord and his keepers. Nor can it be denied that if a landlord insists upon having a very large show of hares, he must consent to allow to the farmers, upon whose crops they feed, some concession or compensation in the form of reduction of rent, or of right to shoot or course. But as regards the Game Laws which protect flying game, there is not much to be said against them; nor do we think that poachers would, in the main, be gainers if Game Laws were abolished, and if it were enacted that to steal a pheasant or partridge was precisely the same offence as to steal a chicken or turkey. A more serious objection to the strict preservation of game than any that arises from the maintenance and enforcement of the Game Laws in their present form seems to us to crop up in the frequent occurrence of severe combats or affrays between gamekeepers and poachers, attended, as they too frequently are, by fatal results. The recent murder of Lord Wharnccliffe's head-keeper, and the recollection of many similar disasters which have occurred within the memory of every middle-aged man, cannot fail to produce a sobering effect upon all thoughtful and conscientious proprietors of strictly-preserved estates, and to force upon their consideration the inconvenient question whether they are justified in foro conscientiæ in purchasing the presence of large numbers of hares and pheasants in their woods and fields at so costly a price. There is, of course, much to be said in favour of the preservation of game on the score of the general immunity and protection from robbers and burglars which night-watchers on an estate secure for its farmhouses and tenements. Nevertheless, the responsibility of jeopardising men's lives, or of damaging their health by privation of sleep, with a view to selfish indulgence in what is, after all, but a pastime, is great enough to induce many a landowner, who is devotedly attached to field-sports and a proficient with his gun, to forego the satisfaction of having his coverts overflowing with game, preserved at such an outlay of money, and it may be of blood.

But without further moralising upon the ethics of game preserving, let us proceed to examine what are likely to be the effects produced upon the general interests of shooting in consequence of the introduction of the breech-loader. We have little hesitation in recording our opinion that its substitution for the muzzle-loader will, in the end, produce no less radical a revolution in the history of this widely-spread pastime than was caused half a century ago by the discovery and introduction of the percussion system. Few more striking and pregnant instances of British adherence to tradition can be found than was manifested, between the years 1815 and 1830, by the reluctance of soldiers to accept any other weapon than the flint-lock musket, which had won Albuera and Salamanca, Toulouse and Waterloo. None of our historical soldiers were more ready in most cases to declare themselves swift and peremptory reformers than the family of the Napiers. And yet we find Sir Charles James Napier, the conqueror of Scinde, emphatically protesting, in or about the year 1818, against the introduction of a percussion musket, which, as he insisted, would induce soldiers armed with it to fire too rapidly, and to throw away half their shots. We fancy that we have heard some such language uttered too, with more show of reason, in regard to the recent armament of our infantry with breech-loaders.

Less indisposition, however, to accept a weapon which was evidently destined to be the fire-arm of the future, was exhibited between 1815 and 1825 by British sportsmen than by British soldiers. It will be remembered that we owe the discovery of the percussion principle of igniting gunpowder in muskets by means of detonating powder to the ingenuity of a clergyman. This is not, *par parenthèse*, the only improvement in the science of destruction for which we are indebted to gentlemen of the same coloured cloth. So long ago as 1807 the Rev. Mr. Forsyth took out the first patent for a percussion musket, nor is it possible even for the least imaginative of men to notice this date without indulging in a passing day-dream upon the possible effects which Mr. Forsyth's discovery might have produced if it had been utilised, during the eight years which followed its publication, by the army of the Duke of Wellington. Nothing, however, was more natural than that this nation, locked, as it was, in a life-and-death grapple with Napoleon, should have had little time or inclination for the investigation of inventions. It was reserved for sportsmen to introduce detonating guns to the favourable notice of the public, and between 1820 and 1830 their use became general. It was in 1822 that Colonel Hawker, while claiming for himself credit as the adapter of the copper cap, instituted a comparison between a duck-gun with detonating lock, and another with flint lock, and demonstrated to his own satisfaction the superiority of the latter. Nevertheless, at that very moment, all the successful young shots of England were revelling in the rapidity of ignition, and the certainty of explosion,

which were the characteristics of the detonator in contradistinction to the flint-lock small-arm. But it is amusing to observe that the slowness of motion, and the disposition to regard all improvement as innovation, which we are accustomed to consider the peculiarities of "the departments" in our own day, were no less markedly discernible in the War Office which had recently conducted England in safety through the greatest struggle she has ever known, and in the mind of the most distinguished soldier whom our country has produced. It is worthy of record that such were the suspicion and distrust with which the authorities viewed the new percussion musket, that it was issued in the first instance only to one company in every regiment. It was not until the efficiency of the weapon was fully established by the decisive victories gained with it on the Sutlej, and in the Punjab, that all departmental hostility to it evaporated and passed away. Its introduction into the French army did not take place until the year 1840.

The most noticeable feature in connection with the substitution of the detonator for the flint lock appears, at first, to have been that the shooting of many men who had been all their lives very indifferent performers with the ancient weapon became sensibly improved when they used the modern. Colonel Hawker found it necessary to alter his instructions for young sportsmen, and to advise them to shoot three, instead of six, inches ahead of a bird flying rapidly across them at 30 yards' distance. But it is curious to remark that the "bags," or returns of game killed, do not appear to have been greatly augmented by the superiority of the new weapon. There is no other estate in England which, as regards the fecundity, accuracy, and antiquity of its annals and anecdotes of shooting, can compare with Holkham. It is hardly necessary to add that no records or annals require to be more jealously and inquisitorially scrutinised than those which have for their subject the shooting achievements of famous shots. We beg at once, and emphatically, to record our protest against the possibility of believing what has been repeated in a hundred books, magazine articles, and journals, that Mr. Osbaldeston once killed ninety-eight pheasants out of one hundred shots. Still more incredible is a story inserted in a rambling book called "*Sportascrapiana*," and which records the score of Captain Horatio Ross in a pigeon-match decided at the Red House, in the year 1828. We quote the words as they appear in "*Sportascrapiana*:"—"Pigeon match; 80 shots—30 yards' rise—5 traps. Captain Ross scored 76 birds killed; three more hit the top of the paling and counted as misses, but fell within the ground. One got over the paling, owing to the right barrel missing fire, but feathered with the left." What may be the precise meaning of these last words we leave the reader to determine. But we imagine that he will have little difficulty, whatever may be his estimate of Captain Ross's profi-

ciency as a marksman, in pronouncing this score to be an exaggeration.

But to return to *Holkham*; it would appear that the bags secured by Mr. Coke and his friends at the end of the last century did not differ materially from those reported immediately after the introduction of the percussion gun. Thus we read that in October, 1797, Mr. Coke, shooting, of course, with a flint gun, upon his manor at *Warham*, and within a mile's circumference, bagged forty brace of birds in eight hours out of ninety-three shots, killing every bird singly. This story smacks a little of the same vein as is apparent in those about *Osbaldeston* and *Ross* to which we have referred, but it has the advantage over them of being believed at *Holkham*. Again, in January, 1808, Mr. Coke, Sir John Shelley, and Mr. Thomas Sheridan went over to *Houghton*, and, traversing the very ground of which the shooting has lately been rented by the Prince of Wales, killed in one day 14 brace of hares, 16 couple of rabbits, 24 brace of pheasants, 13 brace of partridges, and 16 couple of woodcocks. No doubt the Prince of Wales and his associates have made larger bags than this on the same ground during the late season; but it has often been noticed, with surprise, that the percussion gun was not signalled on its introduction by the largely-increased size of the bags which might have been expected. It is a matter for speculation whether this is to be accounted for by believing that men who had long been familiar with the flint gun did not at first understand how to make the most of their new weapon, or whether it arose from greater scarcity of game at the beginning of this century.

Explain it as we may, no more certain evidence of this fact can be adduced than is furnished by the record of the now forgotten, but at one time much-celebrated shooting-match which took place between Colonel Anson and Captain Ross in November, 1828, at the shooting-quarters which Lord de Roos then rented at *Mildenhall*, in *Suffolk*. It cannot fail to have been remarked by sporting antiquarians that the shooting-matches which were so much in vogue thirty or forty years ago, and in which the prowess of two rival marksmen was tested at the expense of partridges or pigeons, have in modern times become as obsolete and unfashionable as races over the Beacon Course at *Newmarket*, or as pugilistic encounters in a 24-foot ring. Be this as it may, there is, perhaps, no similar match that ever excited so much interest, or of which the fame has lived for so many years, as the great "*Ross and Anson match*" to which we have just alluded. We are indebted for the following account of it to a description which emanated from the pen of Captain Ross himself. He relates that in July, 1828, he was returning from the Red House at *Battersea*, in company with Colonel Anson and Lord de Roos. They had been shooting at pigeons, and Lord de Roos, after remarking that no one had a chance against Captain Ross at

pigeons, inquired whether he had equal confidence in his power of shooting game or partridges. Upon receiving an affirmative reply, Lord de Roos proposed that Captain Ross should present himself at Mildenhall upon the first day of the following November, prepared to shoot partridges against any man Lord de Roos produced. It was agreed that the two rivals were to start at sunrise by the watch, and to shoot until sunset without any halt; that no dogs were to be used, but that they were to walk about 40 or 50 yards apart, with two or three men between, or on one side of them; that it was not necessary that any birds should be picked up, but that if a bird was seen by the umpire to drop, it should be considered sufficient. The bet was £200 a side, but to this amount both antagonists added considerably before the event came off. The rest shall be told in Captain Ross's own words:—

“We all breakfasted at Mildenhall by candlelight, and were in line ready to start at the correct moment when by the watch the sun had risen; for we could see no sun, the country being enveloped in mist. Colonel Anson was a particularly fast and strong walker, and seemed to fancy he was able to outwalk me. I was not sorry to see him go off ‘at score,’ as I knew that I was in the highest possible training, and that I was able to keep the pace up without halting for fifteen or sixteen hours. Everything was conducted with the greatest fairness. We changed order every hour, and as Colonel Anson was able to hold on at the same pace, we were fighting against each other as fairly as two men could.

“The Colonel had luck on his side, as the birds rose more favourably for him than for me, and in the course of the match he got eleven more shots than I did; the consequence being that at one time he was seven birds ahead of me. About two o'clock, however, I saw evident signs that he had pretty nearly pumped himself out. The old Squire rode up to me and said, ‘Ross, go along! he'll lie down directly, and die,’ fancying that he was viewing a beaten fox. I was thus able to go right away from the Colonel; and as the birds were so wild, in consequence of the crowd and noise, that few shots were got nearer than 50 or 60 yards, I gradually made up my lee way.

“A quarter of an hour before the expiration of the time when the watch would indicate sunset, Mr. Charles Greville and Colonel Russell rode up to me, and said that Colonel Anson could walk no more; but that he was one bird ahead of me, and Lord de Roos had authorised them to propose to me to make it a drawn match. I had a great deal of money, about £1,000, depending on the result, and had not had a shot for the last ten minutes; so, after a moment's consideration, I came to the conclusion that at that late hour, when the birds were all out of the turnips and feeding on the stubble, it was too large a sum to risk on the chance of getting a brace of birds in a quarter of an hour. I therefore agreed to make it a drawn match. I was as

fresh as when I started, and offered to start then and there, and go on foot to London against any one present, for £500. The number of birds killed by each was absurdly small—only, I think, twenty-five or twenty-six brace. We dined at Mildenhall, and were capitally entertained by Lord de Roos, who had the best of French cooks and the best of French wines." Some time after these words were written, Captain Ross added to them thus:—"Alas! alas! when I look back to that evening! Every one then assembled in the dining-room at Mildenhall, with the exception of myself, is now in his grave; and our polished and accomplished host died a disgraced man!"

This chronicle of a memorable match, although not without interest even after the lapse of well-nigh forty years, is chiefly serviceable on the present occasion as illustrating the smallness of the bag which two of the best shots in England were able to make in 1828 with the newly-introduced percussion gun. Undoubtedly, the facility of loading was not nearly so great between 1820 and 1830 as it became subsequently, between 1840 and 1850. Another lesson which this and all similar matches serve to teach is, the impossibility of fairly testing the comparative skill with the gun of any two men by subjecting them to a single trial of strength. Even the best shots are subject, as Hawker remarks, to great inequality in their shooting; and, in addition, the accident of good or bad luck as to the lie of the birds, will never fail to incline the scale one way or the other, if the two antagonists are as to skill nearly on a level with each other. Fashion, however much it may have deteriorated upon other points, has shown itself discriminating and sagacious in discarding such shooting-matches in the middle of the nineteenth century as were in vogue and popular at its commencement. No one was fonder of these matches in his youth than the late Mr. Osbaldeston; and, it must be added, that few men ever submitted to defeat, which, indeed, was seldom his portion, with so bad a grace. It cannot be doubted that a disposition to get up matches for money between friends, and to promote competition by stimulating men to ride or to shoot against each other, is conducive to anything rather than to good fellowship. For these reasons, we hail with satisfaction the fact that such matches as, according to the author of "*Sportascrapiana*," were continually being made between Colonel Anson, Lord Kennedy, Messrs. Osbaldeston, Farquharson, Cruikshank, Budd, and many more, are now scarcely ever, if ever, proposed.

It is, perhaps, as well that, in these days of breech-loaders, shooting-matches should have gone out of fashion; for few indeed are the partridge manors in England which could stand having many matches shot over them by crack young marksmen of the present time, armed with this weapon. We heard it lately remarked that there are not many coverts in England of which Mr. Thomas De Grey, M.P. for West Norfolk, would not make a clean sweep in three hours, if he

was turned loose in them, armed with his couple of breech-loaders, and with directions to slay and to spare not. It is too late in the day for us to enter now into an elaborate demonstration of the vast superiority of the breech-loading shot gun over its predecessor, for this superiority is all but universally admitted and confessed. The time has long gone by when it was necessary for a sporting writer to take the course adopted in 1857 by the "Old Shekarry," who, in October of that year, advanced thirty reasons in the *Field* newspaper for preferring breech-loaders to any other weapon. The breech-loader now occupies the field, in more senses than one, and reigns, like Alexander, without a rival. The "Old Shekarry's" thirty reasons seem to us susceptible of considerable condensation or compression. The chief advantages of the breech-loader may be summed up in a few words:—1. It may be fired eight times while a muzzle-loader is fired twice. 2. It is much safer, and the loader's hand is never in jeopardy. 3. There is little or no recoil. 4. It hits harder and shoots quicker than its rival. 5. It can be reloaded noiselessly, and without change of position, and without soiling the butt of the gun. 6. The charge can be drawn in an instant, and snipe shot, or duck shot, or ball, can be inserted or removed at will.

It is impossible to overrate the value of this last-named advantage to men who, like the "Old Shekarry," are accustomed to shoot in India, or Africa, or in regions frequented by dangerous wild beasts. There are few greater disadvantages to a good hunter when on a trail, or when stalking a tickle quarry, than to have two or three persons at his heels, carrying his extra guns or rifles, and trebling or quadrupling the noise which he makes in forcing his way through brushwood. Moreover, the experienced hunter, when in pursuit of "big game," such as lions or tigers, greatly prefers to be dependent upon himself alone. Many a sportsman's life has been endangered by his gun-bearers bolting at a critical moment, and leaving him, with both barrels discharged, in the immediate proximity of a wounded and maddened animal. Lastly, it is no slight advantage to a sportsman, tired out after a hard day's fag, to have but one weapon to clean, instead of having to set to work upon four or five guns or rifles, and to perform a task which no man who has shot in Asia, Africa, or America, and who values his own life, ever intrusts to any hand save his own. Now, the possession of one good breech-loader, which is an armoury in itself, sets the sportsman free from all these disadvantages which we have enumerated. While shooting snipe in a jungle, he is not disconcerted at finding himself in the neighbourhood of tiger, or bear, or elephant, for he can substitute a ball for snipe-shot without an instant's delay, and without taking his eye off his enemy. In fact, to sum up the whole case in favour of the breech-loader in the "Old Shekarry's" emphatic words;—"He who has once used a breech-loading gun or rifle will no more think of going

back to a muzzle-loader than the crack marksman at Hythe would return to Brown Bess."

But admitting, as we do, the general superiority of the breech-loader as a weapon framed for the destruction of game, it is impossible not to entertain grave doubts as to the maintenance of the same abundance of game in Great Britain which our predecessors luxuriated in during the second quarter of the present century. The passion of the day is for heavy bags of game shot in comparatively short spaces of time,—say, in from three to four hours,—and with little heed given by the shooter to the question whether the bird which they destroy is a mangled heap of feathers when it falls, or whether it is killed at a proper distance, and in neat and sportsman-like style. By no class of men will a more pregnant sermon be preached, as to the visible effects of the breech-loader upon the birds which it destroys, than by the poulterers of London. Baily, and Fisher, and many of their professional brethren, will tell you that out of the pheasants sent to them, the proportion of birds fit to appear upon the table is continually growing smaller. It was for some time pretended by the champions of the muzzle-loader that it delivered its shot more closely and forcibly than its rival. No one who examines the pheasants now killed in a battue will have any doubt as to the breech-loader being the harder-hitting weapon of the two. So thoroughly is this fact admitted by the London poulterers, that they have invented a method of utilising pheasants which are too hard hit to admit of being roasted, by cutting off the mangled portions of the breast, and making up the remaining portions into minced meat for pheasant or game pies. But there is another fashion, also greatly on the increase in England, which seems to us to bode little good to future abundance of game,—the fashion, we mean, of driving moors and manors, and of killing partridges and grouse from behind a hedge or peat-stack, as they are driven over your head. It is notorious that there are many estates in England, especially in the moorland districts of Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cumberland, and Westmoreland, where, in former times, a moor, beaten in the ordinary way, yielded at most twelve or fifteen brace of grouse in a day, picked up by the laborious exertions of two or three good shots—and that not for many days. But the same moor, if driven according to the modern fashion, will now yield without difficulty, to the same number of guns, 180 or 150 brace in a day. As an illustration of the truth of what we are saying, we have but to instance the Duke of Devonshire's moors in the neighbourhood of Chatsworth. We have all heard a great deal of the grouse disease in Scotland during the past year. Undoubtedly the inscrutable epidemic which has been fatal to so many birds is, in the main, accountable for their greatly diminished numbers. But may it not fairly be asked whether ten years of driving grouse, and of killing them with breech-loaders, have not also something to do with it, and whether a continuation of the same

practices for ten years more will not make itself felt in a manner which will tell very disagreeably upon the rent-roll of many Highland lairds?

The breech-loader, like all other labour-saving machines, is unquestionably a valuable boon to humanity, but it presupposes that the time which it saves in killing game is to be made use of in higher and more profitable occupations. It is a frequent remark of Americans, when commenting upon the numerical strength of the leisure classes in England, that in creating the universe, God made no provision for men and women into whose scheme of daily life no thought or necessity for labour enters as an essential ingredient. If young and luxurious gentlemen fancy that they can, by using the breech-loader, kill as much in four hours as their fathers and forefathers killed in three or four times that space, and that they can also continue to shoot as many days in the year as their predecessors, it needs no prophet to announce to them that they are reckoning without their host. The destruction of game, perpetually indulged in as a pastime, and with no reference to the value as articles of food possessed by the birds or animals killed, must be pronounced by a severe moralist to be in the highest degree reprehensible. And it is worthy of remark that the increased facility for making large bags, conferred upon the sportsman by the breech-loader, has subtracted and withdrawn all general interest from the records of such shooting feats as fifteen years ago were upon every tongue. For years and years the present Lord Panmure and Mr. Campbell of Monee were quoted as the only two men in Scotland who had ever killed a hundred brace of grouse in one day. This feat they accomplished with two or three muzzle-loading guns, one of which was put into their hands after every shot, freshly loaded. There were not wanting sportsmen, however, who thought even this feat eclipsed by the present Lord Wenlock, who, upon a moor in Perthshire, killed ninety-eight brace of grouse with one muzzle-loading gun, loaded throughout the day by his own hand. But whatever interest once attached to these achievements with the muzzle-loader, has now all but faded away in connection with the breech-loader. It is felt that the breech-loader is so much more rapid and deadly a weapon, that few people now care to be told whether Mr. De Grey or any one of his contemporaries have killed 150 or 200 brace of grouse with it in a day. Let the rising generation of sportsmen take good heed, in conclusion, lest in their anxiety to astonish the world with magnificent "bags," they succeed in estranging from a noble sport that degree of popular favour which it has so long enjoyed, and a forfeiture of which could not prove otherwise than fatal in the end to its prosperity and longevity.

Happily, in these days of easy locomotion, there are abundant opportunities for wealthy and adventurous young sportsmen to amuse themselves *outré mer* with more stirring sport than the woods and

fields of England, the moorlands of Scotland, or the bogs of Ireland supply. The wonders of the African continent, as a field for ambitious marksmen, have been revealed to us within the last twenty-five years by a succession of mighty hunters. India continues to offer to Englishmen the same fecundity of sport for which her Ghauts and Himalayas, her jungles and sunburnt wastes, her nullahs and forests, have been perpetually celebrated. But, should the sportsman desire to pursue every variety of game upon a noble continent, rejoicing in a summer climate which makes life in the open air one continual feast, let him repair to the broad plains and prairies or the majestic lakes and rivers of North America, and take his fill of sport, with bear, buffalo, panther, deer, and every variety of land and water-fowl for the objects of his pursuit. We have often meditated upon the exquisite delight with which Colonel Hawker would have launched his Hampshire canoe upon the broad bosom of the Potomac river, and what havoc he would have wrought among the wild swans and brent-geese, and canvas-back ducks, and blue-wings, and all the hosts of wild-fowl with whose cries the whole surface of the stream is vocal after nightfall. What additions would he not here have made to what he calls his "wild-fowl artillery;" what novel instructions would not his ingenuity and experience have suggested for approaching the wary and well-nigh unapproachable wild swan! "Those who have walked," says Colonel Montague, "on a summer's evening, by the sedgy sides of unfrequented rivers, must remember a variety of notes from different water-fowl; the loud scream of the wild goose, the croaking of the mallard, the whining of the lapwing, the tremulous neighings of the jack-snipe, and the booming of the bittern."

If it had been the gallant colonel's fortune "to run the blockade" by crossing the Potomac frequently on dark nights during the recent American war, he would have had ample opportunities of greatly enlarging his list of river-birds and his description of their cries. But whatever may be our passing apprehensions as to the substitution in England of shooters for sportsmen, and whatever our suspicions as to the incompatibility of unrestrictedly-used breech-loaders with the maintenance of an undiminished head of game, we have no fears whatever about any diminution of the pluck, energy, and accuracy of aim which have always distinguished British sportsmen in every part of the globe. Britain will still, we doubt not, continue to produce a never-failing supply of men like Gordon Cumming and Sir Samuel Baker; and if at any time a long course of hot luncheons under the hedge-side, or of kid-gloved manipulation of the breech-loader, may have sapped for a moment the manliness of one of our young porphyrogeniti, it will take but a brief taste of the delights of wild shooting in any land beyond sea to send his blood once more coursing hotly through his veins, and to vindicate his manhood, enterprise, and endurance against all sneers and aspersions.

ON HUMAN LIGNITES.

CHEMISTS, I am assured, have never succeeded in ascertaining what peculiar function is performed in vegetable life by the ligneous part of plants ; for though it would be an easy solution of the difficulty to say that it was totally inert, experience would contradict the assertion, since all physicians are aware that the active principle of vegetable agents invariably loses when disassociated from this seemingly inert portion, and that what are pharmaceutically called "extracts" are invariably deficient in some of the qualities of the compound structure. Various ingenious theories have been thrown out to account for this strange fact, some alleging that the ligneous principle retarded, and thus concentrated the action of the energetic agent ; others averring that the qualities of the so-called inert part were only called forth during the action, and under the stimulating influence of the heroic element.

I must, I grieve to say, leave the controversy where I found it. I have not a word to say to either side of the argument. What led me to the topic, indeed, was not any especial interest in the problem itself, —interesting as it is,—as the question, whether we have not in our daily life phenomena very closely resembling these that I speak of? Does not the world contain a large amount of humanity without any assignable use, who do not seem in any way to influence the course of events, who neither weaken nor strengthen life? Do they not occupy a very large space in this small planet of ours, and are not the mass of mankind ligneous people?

Are not all public bodies, clubs, associations, vestries, even parliaments, largely ligneous? Do you know an institution, a society, do you know even a family, without a ligneous ingredient? Can you lay your hand on your heart and declare that fully three-fourths of your acquaintances are not ligneous?

Certain clubs are almost entirely ligneous, and so with some dinner-parties. The great question then is, What is the function that these people perform in life? For though the Scotch adage has it that "it takes a' sort o' folk to mak' a warld," I do not hold that explanation to be satisfactory in a scientific point of view. To say that they are what chemists call the vehicle which holds in suspension or solution the more active ingredients of life will not meet the case ; for these people are generally disposed to associate together ; they deal with each other, and intermarry and beget other Lignites. They are not, therefore, essentially united with active agents.

I have given the matter much thought. First of all, I had hoped that by reflecting on ligneous people I might have arrived at the solution of that curious problem in vegetable life with which I started in this paper; but the more I considered the question, the more interest did I find myself attaching to the illustration, so that at last it was ligneous humanity which entirely engaged my thoughts and occupied my sympathies.

Lignites were not made without their use, if we could only find it; this was the axiom which I kept ever before me. If zeal and a strong will could have conquered the difficulty, I should have had a triumphant success. Never did a man go more heart and soul into an inquiry. I thought over it by day; I dreamt of it by night; I cross-questioned all the shrewdest men of my acquaintance; I made patient study of the dull ones. I went down to Margate; I spent a winter at Bath; I tried Harrogate,—great centres of lignosities, to watch their ways and note their habits; but they were such close imitations of other men, that it seemed like the same landscape seen through a smoked glass.

A cynical observer once said that between the best and the worst physician there was only the difference between a pound and a guinea. What a dreadful thought if a similar proportion were to rule between the ligneous and the real men! This could not be, for however closely, as I said, the lignites dressed like the real men, walked, rode, dined, and behaved at church like them, the two were in their natures essentially and totally different. From deep study and close investigation, I perceived that though the ligneous element was to be found in every class and condition of life,—from the peer to the peasant,—it abounded more in the well-to-do middle rank, where there is a fair share of comforts, and not an over-proportion of high ambitions. In the artisan class, amongst the better paid, lignosity was not unfrequent. It pervaded largely the class of shopkeepers; grocers had it, and oilmen; and it was frequent amongst hairdressers and wig-makers. It was rare enough with soldiers or sailors on full pay, but actually ravaged them when they retired from the service. Lawyers and doctors had it sparingly, but parsons were much afflicted with it, and generally took it of a severe type, and were what doctors call well-marked cases. Amongst men in high office, some diplomatists were very strong instances; but indeed a subdued form of the disease, what might be styled *Lignitis mitis*, prevails pretty generally through all the ranks of diplomacy.

Now comes the question. Why were these people created? What function do they fulfil? What is their allotted part in the grand scheme of human existence? They could not have been intended to ornament life, nor to render it more pleasurable. Can it be, then, that they are the bitter tonics of existence which fortify and brace us? Is it that they are a sort of moral rhubarb designed to stimulate the stomachs of our depraved natures?

Certain fish, the physiologist tells us, swallow small stones, by the aid of which they triturate the food in their stomach, and render it more easy of digestion. Are the Lignites, then, our small stones? Are these people hard and gritty with a purpose? And is their function in life that amount of friction they supply, and that salutary hindrance to progress, at which ignorance may chafe, but which wisdom sanctions and approves? I almost venture to hope, if I have not hit on the solution of the great puzzle, I have gone near it. I know what a fallacious support a mere personal experience affords to any one in a scientific inquiry, and how frequently instances are subjects of deception. Still, I would prefer my claim to some knowledge of this matter, as one long conversant with Lignites and their ways. From a variety of circumstances, I have been much thrown amongst these people. Indeed, for a portion of my life I saw, spoke to, and moved amongst little other than Lignites, and I have come to the firm conclusion that Lignites are a necessary complement of human existence, and without a certain amount of them the great business of life could not be conducted. Lignites, by their natural slowness of comprehension, by their instinctive dulness, require that in all discussions not only the very amplest explanations of everything should be given, but that continual repetitions should be employed; so that, as the strength of a chain is the strength of its weakest link, the intelligence of any assembly can be gauged by the smallest capacity present. In this way Lignites do great service. Like Charles Fox's barometer;—whatever the Lignite understands, by that few will be puzzled.

In this way parliamentary Lignites are of infinite value. When one of these rises in his place to say that he hopes it will not be imputed to any defective intelligence on his part if he owns that a portion of the right hon. gentleman's statement was totally above his comprehension, the "hear, hear," from the back benches proclaims the presence of many Lignites similarly mystified and be-muddled.

In private life Lignites have a grand function. They form the respectability of the nation. It is to their calm impassiveness, to the statue-like immobility of their moral features, that men look up for the rule of life. In the solemn gravity of their grand maxim, "WE NEVER DO IT," there is a boundless depth of wisdom. Where these words ring out, argument never comes, and reason retires abashed and humiliated. "WE NEVER DO IT" is stronger than logic, just as the natural affections of mankind are stronger than law. "We never do it" is not merely prohibitive; it is condemnatory; it declares that while you or I, in our ignorance, may be habituated to this, that, or the other, there is, to the higher appreciation of superior natures, a warning voice audible enough to say, "Do not do it." This voice Lignites hear; and from their over-watchfulness, as one would say, they were ever listening for its utterances.

Lignites are great at dinner-parties ; indeed, without them there could be none. The general dulness of their presence aids digestion, and induces that amount of drowsiness so conducive to the functions of the duodenum. Conversation should never be over-spiced any more than one's curry, and it is as the boiled rice with the curry that these people come in to dull the sense of taste, and refresh the palate by insipidity. The Anglo-Saxon family is far richer in Lignites than the Latin races, but France has a considerable share of them, and they actually abound in the magistracy. Germany, however, is the native soil where ligneous people attain their fullest development. After race itself,—diathesis the doctors call it,—the desk has an immense influence in the formation of the true ligneous temperament.

In the United States, where the Bore is certainly well marked, it is strange that there are not more Lignites ; but so it is ; the pompous self-sufficiency, the dignified dulness that we meet in England, and never dine out without encountering, is rare in America.

The Bore, of which, as Carlyle informs us, America possesses thirty odd million specimens, is therefore not the Lignite. Indeed, they are totally and essentially different. The Bore is aggressive, insistent, self-asserting, and demonstrative. The Lignite is calmly impassive, and supremely indifferent to all outside himself ; and, as he studiously closes the windows and draws down the blinds of his own nature, you can know nothing of what goes on within. The Bore is many-sided, and, so to say, prismatic. The Lignite is round, smooth, and uniform, like a billiard ball.

In company with the Bore you are driven to detest existence ; with the Lignite you simply despair of it.

Let us be just, however, and acknowledge that without Lignites the public service of this country could not go on. Where, but for them, would you find chief clerks, and under-secretaries, and school inspectors, and consuls, and gaugers ? They are the bureaucracy of the nation, and of them come the men of arithmetic and official returns, census reports, and details of sewerage.

No small share of the imputed superiority of English morality depends upon the grand impassiveness and the severe dulness of the Lignite nature ; and so long as we have a large class well dressed, scrupulously neat, quiet of manner, and of a general dreariness of deportment, blending with our social gatherings,—dancing with us, walking with us, praying with us, and tax-paying with us,—the respectability of our nation is assured ; and however we may be beaten in shipbuilding, in iron casting, in “ textiles,” or in crockery, British morality will have the true trade-mark, and our Lignite stamp us as the most respectable of all European peoples.

Long live the people, then, “ who never do it,” even though they carry the principle to the perusal of the present paper.

THE IRISH CHURCH.

AN Irish Protestant would, perhaps, hesitate to apply to his Church Dryden's proud line on the Papacy—

"Oft doomed to death, though fated not to die."

Yet that threatened institutions live long has been abundantly proved by the history of the Protestant Establishment in Ireland. For now nearly forty years, since Catholic emancipation, it has been the target for wit, scorn, invective, and deliberate condemnation. Every liberal statesman in England has expressed disapproval of it "in principle," and we doubt whether any conservative statesman of the present day would assert that granted a *tabula rasa* in Ireland, it would be wise or just to impose now, for the first time, on the Irish people an institution of the kind. Yet with all this general agreement of opinion, the religious, political, and practical difficulties of the situation are so great, that out of twenty writers or speakers who discuss it, it is difficult to find even one who proposes a plan, or indicates the outlines of a new arrangement. Young politicians of this generation may suppose that now, with Irish disaffection rife, the time has surely arrived when "something must be done," but a glance at history will show that thirty-three years ago there seemed a much better prospect of a permanent settlement. The great liberal party, refreshed from its Reform victory, regained office in 1835 on a motion proposed by Lord John Russell, declaring that a portion of the revenues of the Irish Church should be applied to education. Here was the distinct pledge of a great party. Liberal ministries have been in power for twenty-five out of the thirty-three years that have elapsed since then, and yet that pledge is still unredeemed. The collection of tithes has been altered, but the Established Church still remains what it always was,—a State Church, supported in the main by a tax on Irish land,—paid directly by the landlord and indirectly by the tenant,—and out of its ample revenues not one shilling has been devoted to the purposes of education. Liberal leaders, however, bear very resignedly this defeat of their old cause; and it is curious to note in these matters the different kinds of political dishonesty that belong to the two great parties in the State. Tory ministers are forced to adopt the measures they denounced in opposition; liberal ministers are obliged to abandon the principles they proposed when not in power. The Tories attain office by promises of

resistance that they falsify when on the Treasury Bench. The Liberals gain power by promises of performance which, as officials, they fail to fulfil. As we have indicated, the Irish Church presents practical difficulties enough to daunt Danton himself; but how is it that the leader of the Opposition always refuses to see any of the difficulties which are made so very clear to him when he has to put his ideas into a Cabinet measure?

It would be presumption in any writer to indicate imperatively the one right way of discussing this inveterately vexed question, yet it may be permissible to suggest that there are several wrong ways of beating about the bush. For instance, there can, we think, be no doubt that while discussions as to the legitimate or illegitimate descent of the present Establishment from the ancient Irish Church may be very interesting to the historian, the antiquarian, or the theologian, and very fascinating for Dryasdust, they have no political interest whatever. Even if we grant everything demanded by the clerical friends of the Church, and much more; if we grant that St. Patrick was a staunch Protestant, who hated the Bishop of Rome, abjured the mass, detested the five extra sacraments, had "one wife" and several children, and would have upheld the supremacy of Henry VIII. if he had only heard of him in time, what then? What is that to us at the present day? We find the majority of the Irish people non-Protestants. If they have fallen away from the pure faith of their forefathers, so much the worse for them in this world, according to Carlyle—and in the next, according to theologians; but that does not help us out of our political difficulty, which simply arises from their discontent at the existence of a Church they refuse to recognise. If, up to thirty years ago, the whole Irish people were Protestant, and since then they had all become "verts," the political difficulties of the position would still remain. We should still have to face the problem;—is it right to tax a whole people for the support of the creed of a minority?

"Another way," as Mrs. Glasse says, may be indicated among the many improper methods of discussing the topic. Roman Catholic writers record the rapine, butchery, and penal laws that were used as weapons by the first founders of the Irish Church; but though a student analysing Irish history and Irish character, may profitably study these matters to find out the sources of many unabated defects and evils in the character and condition of the people, still it would be unjust and absurd to make the quiet parsons of the present day answerable in any degree for the sins of their ancestors. If we come to that kind of historical recrimination, this European method of defiling forefathers' graves, who would get the worst of it?—Roman Catholics or Protestants? the descendants of Inquisitors and peasant assassins, or the great-grandchildren of the framers of the Penal Laws? Surely it is better to leave such irritating and irrelevant references entirely aside.

There is a third way of discussing this question, unobjectionable in itself, but hardly, we fear, applicable. It is sometimes suggested that we should "recur to first principles;" and ask, "Is it right to tax any man for the support of any institution of which he does not approve?" The answer must be that, whether it is right or wrong, we do it every day when we take an extra war twopence in the income tax from a Quaker, or pay Roman Catholic chaplains and schools out of the Consolidated Fund, fed as it is mainly by taxes imposed on Protestants. Other first principles are also not very useful guides. The Bishop of Ossory says that it is the duty of the State to maintain for the use of the people a Church that will bestow on them at once "a pure ritual and Scriptural truth." But can we afford to take up this principle and carry it out in act? If we do, we must plant an Episcopal Church in every Scotch parish,—sadly wanting at present in "pure ritual,"—and other institutions of the kind amongst the Canadian Papists, now destitute of what the Bishop would call "Scriptural truth;" to say nothing of India, where the enforcement of the idea would simply mean the total loss of that empire,—a small sacrifice for a true principle, but a serious loss if the principle is not true, and only put forth as a *cheval de bataille* by the defenders of the Irish Church. Moreover, if we accept this missionary character as the true "note" of the Irish Church, its defenders should altogether change their tone. For instance, there is in the diocese of Cork a parish called Nathlash, in which the "Protestant population" amounts to one man. This circumstance has not daunted our "missionary" zeal. There is a church, an incumbent at £200 a year, the church is yearly repaired, so that the expense for the four years ending 1865 amounted to £113 9s. 3d., and the expense for "church requisites" averages £18 a year. Now, if it is our duty to send missionaries where they are most wanted, there is hardly any part of Ireland where they are more wanted than at Nathlash. The "harvest," consisting of many thousand unconverted Papists, is plentiful, and we can increase the Protestant population a hundred per cent. by simply converting another man. In fact, if it be our duty to spread Scripture truth amongst Irish Papists, England may, next to its expenditure of £20,000,000 for West Indian negroes, point to what it does at Nathlash, as one of the noblest instances on record of its devotion to a great cause; and instead of the Establishment being "a blot," or "an anomaly," or "a dark spot," as some weak persons call it, it is a crowning glory of the great design. Nor is the beauty of the idea affected by the fact that the money is paid by Irish, not English, taxpayers. To make Irish Catholics pay for the salvation of an Irish Protestant is not only economical for us, but beautifully just. It may be that the Irish Church can be defended on lower grounds, but if its defenders take the high ground

of its scriptural truth and missionary character they must, we maintain, regard such instances of our zeal as noble, elevated, and wise. For our part, not seeing the beauty of the Nathlash arrangements, we must decline to take the Bishop of Ossory's idea as a guiding light.

If, then, we are forced to ignore the supposed striking identity of doctrine between St. Patrick and Archbishop Trench, to forget the Penal Laws, and to reject first principles as inapplicable lights, we come to the very plain practical ground of political expediency, a balancing of the amount of good and the amount of mischief caused by our continued maintenance of the Protestant Church. Were the Roman Catholics now in Ireland scattered like our Dissenters amongst a Protestant population, the question could hardly arise in its present formidable shape, just as English Presbyterianism has never obtained the establishment granted to the Scottish Church. But Irish Romanism and Irish "nationality" are practically the same thing. When writers or speakers utter the words, "Justice to Ireland," they mean concessions to the Roman Catholic majority of that country. And this is natural. In tone and sentiment, in the absence of "national" or quasi national Irish feelings, in their almost servile reverence for England and English institutions, in their hostility to the pure Celt, the Protestants of Ireland are more English than the English themselves. Through their ancestors, who profited by our conquests, confiscations, and penal laws, they hold three-fourths of the land as lords of the soil; their Church is supported by the State; and in return they love us, and to show their love they are always abusing for us the mere Irish, the Roman Catholic majority, whose loyalty is supposed to be doubtful, and who have neither lands nor loaves and fishes to make them tranquil and content. Considering these things, men who study what are called Irish questions are obliged to leave Irish Protestants entirely out of sight, just as Indian statesmen, discussing the people of India, always set aside our own countrymen as men of a different class, or as we forget the Episcopalians, when we speak of "Scotland" as Presbyterian in faith. This omission of a respectable minority may seem for a moment insulting, but is really nothing of the sort. It simply means that the Protestants of Ireland are rich, respectable, industrious, well fed, contented, and give us little trouble. They are like the eldest son, for whom nobody kills a calf, and whose attachment to his father excites neither joy nor surprise.

Naturally the first idea of any radical reformer of the Irish Church must be its "utter abolition" as a State establishment, and its entire disendowment,—reducing it to the rank now held by the Irish Roman Catholic Church. "If this were done when it was done, then it were well it were done quickly." But would it be done when it was done? would it be the end of controversy? We fear not. The Irish Romanist

prelates, who demand the secularisation of revenues that once belonged to their own Church, and now to ours, have incurred the condemnation launched in the Pope's Syllabus against such "impious" doctrines; and against such secularisation in Spain and Italy the Church of Rome has constantly protested. But even if we look at Ireland alone, we find an inconsistency in the attitude of the Church of Rome. Not only does it willingly take a grant for Maynooth, but, assenting to the continued existence of Trinity College as in the main a Protestant institution, actually demands an endowment for the Catholic University in Stephen's Green. What difference is there in principle between the priests receiving from the State so many thousands a year in aid of lay and clerical education, and the same priests receiving money from the State for the spiritual training of their flocks? Why should the one class of gifts affect their independence and the other not? It must also be remembered that this demand by Cardinal Cullen for the endowment of his university is new, and is in all likelihood only the forerunner of other demands. These things indicate that the mere withdrawal of State support from the Protestant Church would not settle the question. The Roman Catholics of Ireland are a political as well as a religious party; they have a small compact body of members who on religious questions vote as one man; and a minister hard pressed would be only too happy to purchase support by State gifts, or by giving over to the control of the priests the sums already voted for education, grants that we cannot possibly withdraw. It is said, "All these things will disappear if you establish the voluntary system pure and simple." Perhaps so; but what does a voluntary system, pure and simple, and thoroughly carried out on Irish soil, really imply? It means not only the abolition of the State Church, the Maynooth Grant, and the Regium Donum, but the disendowment of the University of Dublin, the Queen's Colleges, and the National Schools! All these derive their funds from old or new State grants, and all are battle-grounds for the rival sects. If the priests and parsons had no Church revenues to quarrel over, they would fight over University endowments; and these removed, they would continue the controversy as to the allocation of the funds or the management of the National Schools. If, then, we are not prepared,—and nobody can say that we are,—to abstain altogether from State aid to Irish religion and Irish education, we cannot purchase complete or final peace by the mere abolition of the State Church. It is only one of the institutions about which the rival sects are resolved to fight. So long as we grant a single penny to any institution intended for the training of the minds of men, women, or children, so long will priests and parsons fight for the penny, and contend for the control of the institution. A limited abdication of our State claims will therefore do us, we fear, very little good.

Then, apart from questions of endowment, it seems to us that the "utter abolition" of the Irish State Church would be rather awkward work. Would it be still a part of the Church of England? Or would it be merely in communion with it like the Episcopal Church of Scotland? Are the clergy to elect the bishops as in the ancient Church, and the congregations to elect the clergy as in the American Episcopal Church? And are its bishops to remain spiritual peers? On that question the House of Lords itself will be sure to claim exclusive jurisdiction, as it did in the question of life-peers; and the probabilities are that we might see an un-established Archbishop of Dublin still retaining his seat as a Lord of Parliament,—to the continued discontent of his Roman Catholic rivals.

The probable effects in Ireland itself of "utter abolition" must be to a great extent matter of rather uncertain estimate,—almost mere guess-work. The loud talk of the Hillsborough meeting does not, we think, really amount to much. If the Protestants of Ireland were once compelled to support their own clergy, they would probably in a few years look back with surprise to a time when their leaders declared that the withdrawal of State endowments would cause serious injury to their cause. They have wealth, education, position, and traditions of social superiority that tell in all professions. If they cannot afford to pay their own ministers, and build their own churches, voluntarism anywhere must be a delusion and a snare. When peasants support their priests, landed proprietors can surely afford to pay their parsons. Therefore, as regards pecuniary results, there can be little doubt that Irish Protestant congregations can manage their own financial affairs exceedingly well, and that the withdrawal of State aid would not lead to spiritual destitution. But there is another consideration. The Irish Establishment, as now maintained by the State, is ridiculously over-manned. To give one instance; the suppressed see of Kilfenora, now included in the diocese of Killaloe, still contains the diocesan staff appropriate to its former dignity. There are within its boundaries forty-nine Protestant families,—in all, two hundred and fifty-one souls,—the population of a hamlet, a handful of people that could probably supply a congregation of at most one hundred and fifty hearers; that is, they could be packed into an ordinary drawing-room, or would, perhaps, fill one gallery in a well-sized church. How many Protestant clergymen are paid to minister to their wants? Two? three? six? Well, the "staff" is as follows;—a dean, an archdeacon, a treasurer, a rural dean, a vicar-general, a registrar, four incumbents, and two curates! It must also be remembered that the forty-nine families thus amply provided for in spiritual things, include the families of the clergymen and the church officials. Of course it is very clear that a Free Church in Ireland would never tolerate such absurdities. The Protestants of that country may be rich, and may

develop, if compelled, a liberality now never shown because it is not required; but they would never support a host of useless dignitaries to do nothing but draw salaries they cannot possibly earn, even with the best goodwill.

But apart from the retrenchment that would thus come from abolition, there is another consideration that must strike all who know anything of Irish Protestantism. English Evangelicals sometimes lament that the Dissenters and the Church seem separated by a gulf. Let them cross the Channel, and they will see the reverse of the medal, and be gratified with evangelical union carried to its utmost extent. Young ladies attend Church service in the morning, and in the evening listen with delight to a roving Baptist, a stray Wesleyan, or a converted weaver. If you try to explain to them that in England some stress is laid on apostolic succession and episcopal ordination, and that Churchmen do not frequent Dissenting chapels, they stare at you as that strange monster a Puseyite: "What can these things matter so that the Gospel is preached?" will be their usual retort. Now we are quite convinced that if the Episcopalian Protestants of Ireland were compelled to support their own clergy, they would, in many cases, secede to the already established Dissenting chapels. The high opinion that even English Low Churchmen have of our Liturgy is not shared to any great extent by Irish Protestants. The Bible with them ranks far above the half-Puseyite Prayer Book; and "the Protestantism of the Protestant religion" is much more than half their faith. In fact, the Irish Protestant may be described as a man greatly attached to his religion, but indifferent to his Church in its spiritual character,—though proud of it and fond of it as a political establishment. And this characteristic of our fellow-religionists in Ireland is partly due to historical and partly to modern political causes. Under Charles II. Puritanism in England was well-nigh crushed; it was expelled from manse and glebe and mansion-house, from Parliament and the pulpit,—in fact, deprived of all official and popular power. But, in Ireland, the statesmen of the Restoration found Cromwell's ex-troopers so firmly fixed in their holdings, and making such a manful fight against the "mere Irish Papists," still detested even by English Tories, that they left them undisturbed. Thus, whoever won, the wretched Irish suffered loss. Cromwell confiscated the lands of Irish loyalists, and Charles II. did not restore them. Then the Penal Law made intense Protestantism a profitable faith for political and social advancement. So that there are more reasons than one for the fact that the Irish branch of the United Church is as little Papist or Puseyite as Lord Shaftesbury himself could desire. There is hardly a single Protestant in Ireland who would, like Keble, call the Church of Rome a "sister church." All Protestant sects, established, endowed, or unendowed, are united by a common bond of antagonism to the

Popery which is not, as in England, an obscure antagonist, but a present and formidable foe. It is, therefore, pretty certain that the Protestant Episcopal Church in Ireland would lose some of its adherents if all congregations had to support their clergy. Where there are no great differences of faith or feeling the cheaper forms of ecclesiastical ordinance would be sure to win. It is also, we think, pretty clear that the Irish Church, released from State control and deprived of its funds through Romanist agitation, would develop new theological bitterness towards the Roman Church. At present the position of a conscientious Protestant clergyman is rather hard. He is ordained, and accepts his position with the same unquestioning faith in the Church and in his calling that is possessed by an English clergyman of the same type. Yet from the moment he accepts a living, he finds by the newspapers that he is no mere minister—he becomes a political personage. He thinks naturally enough that “the errors of Popery” are soul-destroying; but if he acts on that belief, and tries to convert the Roman Catholics in his parish, he is held up to obloquy as “a man paid by the State to insult the Irish people.” He thinks that all boys should be taught to read the Bible; if he carries out that theory in his school he is refused all Government aid, and as an opponent of national education has injured his chance of preferment. If he makes himself very vigorous in efforts to convert the Roman Catholics, he weakens his chance of a bishopric from those liberal Governments which partly depend on Roman Catholic support, and which have had the lion’s share of political patronage during the last thirty-five years. It is, therefore, very probable that though stunned for the time by the loss of funds, Irish churchmen would revive to very vigorous life if once released from what Dr. Pusey calls “the fetters” of the State. They would become more and more aggressive against the Man of Sin.

In this connection it is rather curious to read the testimony of one of the very best of the Irish Roman Catholic prelates, Dr. Moriarty, Bishop of Kerry. In an anti-Fenian pastoral issued early last year, he states that Ireland has been “preserved from infidelity,” and adds:—

“In accounting for this merciful preservation, we attribute much to the fact that, in all our polemical contests, a belief in Revelation, and in the Godhead of our Blessed Saviour, was assumed and supposed by the combatants on either side. The divinity of the Christian religion was not the battle-ground on either side. While Catholic and Protestant argued about Christ’s authority, and about sacraments and sacrifices, all these united in belief of the inspiration of God’s written word, of the great mysteries of the Incarnation, of the Redemption of Christ, of the judgment to come, and of the everlasting salvation. It could not, therefore, enter into the minds of the people to doubt these truths, which the rival champions of contending churches,

in all the fierceness and heat of controversy, never called in question. . . . No testimony is stronger than that of witnesses between whom there is no possibility of collusion. Are we to throw away these advantages at the very time danger seems imminent again?"

Dr. Moriarty, it may be added, inclines to a compromise on this question,—an allotment of a portion of the funds of the Establishment, —not to the payment of priests, but to the building of Roman Catholic churches and schools; and, from the whole tone of his discourse, it may be gathered that, though eager for ecclesiastical equality, however brought about, "either by levelling up or levelling down," he is not anxious for the disendowment of the Protestant Church. He, it will be seen in the following extract, lays some stress on the tranquillising effects of endowment, and half dreads the fiery zeal of unendowed ministers.

"It must be said—and we say it with pleasure, for we rejoice in all that is good—that, in every relation of life, the Protestant clergy who reside among us are not only blameless, but estimable and edifying. They are peaceful with all, and to their neighbours they are kind when they can; and we know that, on many occasions, they would be more active in beneficence, but that they do not wish to appear meddling, or incur the suspicion of tampering with poor Catholics. In bearing, in manner, in dress, they become their state. If they are not learned theologians, they are accomplished scholars and polished gentlemen. There is little intercourse between them and us, but they cannot escape our observation; and sometimes when we noticed that quiet and decorous and modest course of life, we felt ourselves giving expression to the wish,—*talis cum sis utinam noster esses*. Now, would it be convenient to force these men from their neutral and inoffensive position, and to make their antagonism a necessary condition of their existence? Would it be well to change the meek unobtrusive parson into a fiery proselytising zealot? This seems worth consideration."

On the other hand it must be admitted that, amongst the Protestant laity, the political effect of utter abolition would be ultimately good. There would then be no permanent question on which Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants would be forced into antagonism, while there would remain many on which they could unite. The Protestants, no doubt, would lose a great deal of that rather Pharisaic loyalty which vaunts itself by pointing to the alleged disloyalty of that "publican yonder"—the Roman Catholic; but what we should gain would be an amount of union in Irish sentiment that would greatly simplify our legislation. We sometimes flatter ourselves that nothing but the firm, strong, impartial hand of English power prevents Ireland from becoming a scene of strife and blood; and that, if the English army were withdrawn, we should immediately see a war of religion and

racés. "This was sometime a truth, but is now a paradox." It would be a severe satire on English Government to say that, after seven hundred years' rule, we have left the Irish nothing but savages, ready to fly at one another's throats the moment we should withdraw our Viceroy and our troops. It is forgotten that these very "wild Irish" are simply Englishmen, "with a difference," affected, no doubt, by a larger infusion of Celtic blood, affected by climate, affected by the peculiar politics of the island, affected on the one hand by Puritanism and on the other hand by Popery; but still much more like Englishmen than the planter of South Carolina was like the Yankee of Massachusetts. We point to the perpetual discord of class and sect in Ireland. But it is forgotten that the rival sects are like dogs fighting round their master for a bone. The whole fight is for our favour;—class and class quarrel because the one inherits the recollections and privileges of the dominance we gave it, while the other inherits memories of the past wrongs they suffered at our hands. The superior class is always fearing the withdrawal of their privileges, and the inferior always hoping for the satisfaction of their claims. We believe it is quite probable that the establishment of ecclesiastical equality in Ireland, however effected, so that the settlement should be final, would ultimately produce an amount of social and political unity we have never seen in that distracted land.

It will be seen that we anticipate increased Protestant vigour in the Irish Church if it were once released from State control. It may be asked, Would not that change add to the fire of religious hatred? In some cases no doubt it would. But it is curious to note that the Irish priests regard the attacks of un-Established Protestants with comparative good humour and contempt. Against the purely theological weapons of the Methodists or Presbyterians they wield with great effect their own armour of symbolism and spiritual appeal. But the parson of the parish is not only a priest, but a squire. He occupies the glebe-house, with its fifty or a hundred acres; he employs many men; he is often a kind, good-humoured, resident landlord; he is hand-and-glove with all the magistrates and gentry; his wife is charitable in the way of blankets and soup; he is himself a prosperous, pleasant, living embodiment of flourishing heresy. Even if, like some of the clergy of the Establishment, he never utters a word of controversy, his good acts, his useful influence, his very presence, are bulwarks of Protestantism; and his social superiority gives him great advantages over the much poorer priest, with much less influence with those "gentlemen" to whom poor Paddy is so often obliged to appeal for favour or gifts. It must be remembered that in many parts of Ireland there is no such thing as a Roman Catholic gentry, and that in many parishes, where the Catholic population, compared with the Protestants, is ninety-five to five, all the land is

owned by Protestant landlords. Acting on the principle that led to the establishment of a State Church, some of those conscientious Protestant landlords have "encouraged truth" and "discouraged error" by refusing to grant the Roman Catholics a site for a chapel. The refusal seems harsh; and yet if a State Church, supported because it is true, be right in principle, this refusal is also right. We are not aware whether, at the present day, any scrupulous Protestant proprietor is still able to deny the Papists the luxury of a roof, but within the last twenty years there have been many localities where the owners of the soil have refused a site. One instance is thus recorded in the "*Freeman's Journal*" of November 30, 1867, with reference to the parish of Carrigaholt, in the diocese of Killaloe. We are thus particular in our quotation, in the faint hope that some person may be able to deny the assertion:—

"It is not a score years since the people of the populous parish of Carrigaholt had, owing to the spirit with which the Penal Code imbued the landed proprietors of Ireland, to hear Mass in the open air in the street, a sentry-box on four wheels, veered according to the wind and weather, serving for the altar and the priest who ministered during the celebration—which primitive temple was familiarly known as 'The Ark.' The priest and the altar were sheltered from the sun and from the storm, but the wealthiest as well the poorest Catholic in the parish had to kneel in the open street, the local proprietor persistently refusing a site for a Popish Church on the very soil from which the Catholics were expelled by his predecessors. The town contained in 1861 just two Anglicans, and 580 Catholics, and the whole parish 5,033 persons, of whom only 141 were not Catholics."

Thus in Ireland the territorial power of the Established clergy is aided by the territorial power of a Protestant landed class; and even in the great majority of cases where the owners of the soil exercise these rights with forbearance, the parson is, owing to his endowments and his connections with the State, one of the territorial aristocracy; and it is impossible for priests and peasants to forget that in the past struggles between race and race, and sect and sect, they have been the losers, and the Protestants the permanent victors and inheritors of the spoil. We cannot, even to gratify the Fenians, hand over the landed estates of private gentlemen to be divided amongst the tenants; but our grants to the clergy are more easily revocable, because they were made on public grounds in the hope that they would lead to the conversion of the "natives," and are only held for the life of the present possessors. By such revocation, partial or complete, the present results of past penal laws could be mitigated in every Irish parish.

To sum up the case as regards "utter abolition"—

1. It would establish ecclesiastical equality in Ireland, and so remove the religious element from politics.
2. It would release the conscientious Protestant clergy from the political control of the State, and add to their zeal against "Popery."
3. It would gratify the Roman Catholic clergy, and deprive them of a grievance against the State.
4. It would at first inflame Irish Protestants, but finally induce them, partly through resentment and partly through a new national feeling, to unite with Irishmen of other sects in demanding boons from the Government.
5. It could hardly be final or complete in its removal of religious discords, because the educational questions would still afford opportunities for the contests of rival sects for State endowments.
6. It would be full of difficulty as regards the allotment of the funds diverted from the Church : which, if given to education, would cause a renewed struggle of the rival schools.

It will be seen that there is a kind of balance of good and evil in the probable results. The desideratum is some adjustment that would secure the beneficial and avoid the evil results; and such adjustment is believed by many to lie in the equivalent endowment of the Roman Catholic Church; so that we should raise that to the level of the Establishment, not lower the other to a dependence on its own resources. The question remains, How is this to be done? The Roman Catholic Bishops declare that they will not accept any portion of the endowments of the Protestant Church; but they add their reasons; because their independence would be affected thereby. The obvious inference is, that if we could hit upon some plan of endowing that Church without making the priests direct yearly pensioners of the Crown, the problem would be solved. Is this impossible? Cardinal Cullen even now is willing to take any amount of money we offer him, so that we call it an endowment for the Catholic University; and surely English statesmanship is not so destitute of tact that it cannot devise some plan that will satisfy Peter without totally despoiling Paul.

There are several arguments on the Protestant side of the question which require consideration and reply. It is said that the Act of Union guarantees the existence of the Irish Church, because it declares that the Churches of England and Ireland are "united into one Protestant Episcopal Church, the government of which is to remain in force for ever." In the first place, the Act of Union in its entirety, or as regards any clause, is merely an Act of Parliament, to be repealed whenever Parliament pleases; and secondly, the letter of the Act would be fulfilled so long as we allow a spiritual connection between the Church of

England and its Irish branch. As to our right to redistribute its temporalities, that is unquestionable, and it has been already exercised: for instance, by the Church Temporalities Act of 1833 we "despoiled" Connaught of much surplus revenue, to be applied by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to the spiritual necessities of Ulster and Leinster, and by the Act of 1838 we handed over 25 per cent. of the Church property to the landlords, nominally as commission for collecting tithes, but virtually as a bribe. It is also said that on moral grounds we have no right to withdraw a grant once made to the Church. But this amounts to the assertion that if we appoint and pay a parson in a particular parish, we are bound to go on appointing and paying a parson in that locality for ever, and that under no circumstances whatever have we a right to hold our hand. For instance, if the one Protestant who forms the congregation of Nathlash were unhappily to die, it is contended that we still owe it to Scriptural truth, to missionary zeal, and to good faith, to fill up the next vacancy in the incumbency, to appoint a clerical gentleman at £200 a year to do no duty, and to keep on carefully repairing an empty church. In fact, this, our supposed duty, has been already fulfilled. In the same diocese that contains Nathlash,—or rather, correctly speaking, the united dioceses of Cork, Cloyne, and Ross,—we find that we pay £386 a year to the incumbent of Killaspugmullane,—little enough for accepting such a title,—but the parish contains no Protestants; we pay £179 a year to the incumbent of Aglishdrinagh, with no Protestants; £213 a year to the incumbent of Kilteskín, with no Protestants.

As we have said before, if we accept the principle that it is our duty to plant a Scriptural Church in a Popish land, at the expense of the benighted Papists, these and such like are the most interesting and important points of the "missionary field." Here "heathenism" most prevails; here there is most good work to be done, and we should be most proud of our perseverance in offering means of grace for several generations to these obstinately unconverted souls. On the contrary, if we declare, as some persons do, that the Established Church in Ireland is not missionary, and that its only *raison d'être* is its spiritual usefulness to Irish Protestants, we cut the ground from under its feet. For why should Papists pay for the spiritual advantages of Protestants? The only defensible theory of the Church is, that it was founded for all, that it is open to all, that all must pay for it, and that we ought to maintain a clergyman in every parish, even where there is not now a single Protestant, on a chance that some day Protestantism may creep in. Sydney Smith put the case with his usual felicity when he said:—"I have always compared the Protestant Church in Ireland to the institution of butchers' shops in all the villages of our Indian Empire." We will have a butcher's shop in every village, and you

Hindoos shall pay for it. We know that many of you do not eat meat at all, and that the sight of beefsteaks is particularly offensive to you; but still, as a stray European may pass through your village, and may want a steak or chop, the shop shall be established, and you shall pay for it. It is this theory that really justifies Nathlash.

It is also said on the Protestant side of the question that the Established Church clergyman is a resident gentleman who spends his income in Ireland, and in his own locality. That is quite true; and many of the clergy are active, useful, charitable men. But if we took half the parson's income from him, and gave it to the priest, the money would still be spent in the parish. And here we may notice the attacks sometimes personally made on Protestant rectors by Roman Catholic writers and speakers. They are denounced as dishonest because they accept tithes. Nothing can be more unjust. A Protestant clergyman has as good a right, morally or legally, to his income, as the clerk of the Crown, or the county surveyor; and if we "abolish his office" he has a right to compensation. Nor has a Roman Catholic any moral or legal right to refuse to pay tithes because they are applied by the State to Protestant uses. The question is one not of individual right, but of imperial policy, and we, the State, have a perfect right to reconsider the whole question, and, saving the vested interests of individuals, to arrange the whole system. The present county surveyor for Cork has no right, for instance, to insist that we shall maintain that office for ever, and that there shall always be a surveyor for that county, and the present incumbent of Nathlash has no right to say that it would be sacrilege if, on his death, we refused to appoint another man. It is entirely a matter within our discretion whether, on vacancies occurring, we appoint new men to the vacated offices, and whether we allot certain funds out of the imperial or local taxes for their support. The questions are, What useful public functions do they discharge? Do the majority of the taxpayers who support them derive benefit from their services? Are the general political results eminently satisfactory? Apply these questions to the Irish Church, and await the reply.

HAVERING ATTE BOWER.

"Havering Bower—a village in Essex, was a seat of some of our Saxon kings. Edward the Confessor took great delight in it, as being woody, solitary, and fit for devotion. It so abounded with nightingales, says the old legend, that they disturbed him in his devotions; he therefore earnestly prayed for their absence; since which time never nightingale was heard to sing in the park, but many without the pale, as in other places."—*Tour Round London*, 1796.

Pity, ye Saints! and send these birds away
I cannot meditate. I cannot pray.
Their ceaseless melody disturbs me so,
My visions now no longer heavenward go.
I murmur to the measure of their song
Ave and Credo as I pace along;
Matin and Vesper mingle with their notes,
And to the quivering of their restless throats
My footsteps on the flowery sward I beat.
They break the silence of this green retreat.
On them I put the wanderings of my soul,
The earth-born thoughts o'er which I've no control;—
Sinful emotions that o'erpower my will.
Pity, ye Saints! and bid the birds be still.

I wake and hear them singing in the night,
And when I pray that it may soon be light
Louder they anthem in the coming dawn!
And so my thoughts again are earthward drawn.
My priests are holy men, and say that these
Are not the "little angels of the trees,"
That sing like nuns amid the arbours dim
At morn and starry eve their welcome hymn,
But spirits of evil that have found their way
To Havering Bower to lead my soul astray,
Hiding amid the branches which o'erhead
At golden noonday a green twilight spread.
Oh, Mary, Mother! drive away the brood,
And let me kneel in peace before the rood,
Without a wandering thought. Oh! let me see
Thy Holy Son once more look down on me.

Do my priests play me false? At times I fear
It is my accusing conscience that I hear

In the sweet nightingale's low dying fall,
Bidding me back again my Edith call,—
My imprisoned queen, who weeps and prays for me,
On the bare floors of a grey nunnery.*
'Twas at this flowery season of the year,
When in her maidenhood I led her here,
And kneeling on this lawn of daisied green,
I rose not till she vowed to be my queen,
Sealing the oath with mutual entwine,
Her yielding lips close-bedding into mine.
The nightingales were singing all the time,
Bringing back Eden in its golden prime,
And then I swore, "If I am false to thee,
May those birds ever my accusers be."
They are—And ever have been night and day
Since from these bowers I banished thee away.

Why did I bring those Normans o'er the sea?
Why listen to their whispers against thee?
Unhappy hour! when I sent thee away
To weep and pine amid those cloisters grey.
Ever those words the nightingales still sing,
Ever their burthen is, "Deluded king,
Go fetch her back all royally arrayed,
She was the sunshine of this leafy shade.
Blind king, she was the sweetest Saxon flower
We ever sung to sleep in Havering Bower.
Then shalt thou hear again the songs we sung,
When like a pearl upon thy breast she hung.
Then shall thy fettered soul have free release,
And while thou prayest our loud singing cease."
For so I shape their songs that fill the air,
So syllable their notes amid my prayer;
So are they backward by my conscience driven
When e'er I try to turn my thoughts to heaven.
The words turn prick-song notes, and mock the creed
Which in my missal I attempt to read;
And in the illumined pictures of the saints
My pure-souled Edith fancy ever paints;—
Her likeness in the image only trace
While gazing on the holy Mary's face.
I dare not bring her back, for my priests say
Her eyes will further lead my soul astray.

* Queen Edith, daughter of Earl Godwin. When Edward banished the brave Saxon and his sons, he shut his queen up in a nunnery.

Birds are God's messengers, and they may bring
 Evil or good to an annointed king.
 Soaring on dusky wings, the ravens cried
 All through the night on which King Canute died.
 And ever to their heavenly mission true,
 At night and morning they came into view
 Of Cherith's brook, to bring Elijah food.
 And I have felt, while kneeling at the rood,
 It was by birds that things were oft foretold
 To kings and seers in the days of old.
 So have I heard the nightingales that sing,
 Shaping their notes to name the coming king,
 And I have started from my sleep profound
 Fancying I heard his Norman trumpets sound ;
 And dimly in the troubled dreams of night
 I've seen him on this island shore alight,
 And Edith weeping on the sea-ribbed strand
 Holding her brother Harold's blood-stained hand.
 And all the while the nightingales did sing,
 " Woe, woe, to England when the Norman's king."
 These prophets of ill-omen send away,
 Ye saints, that I in peace may once more pray.

My widowed mother married to the Dane,
 Allowed the sons she bore Canute to reign,
 Though I was heir to Saxon Ethelred,
 And born ere she the stormy Sea-king wed.
 But I was banished from my native land,
 And friendless left without a guiding hand.
 Brought back, they placed me on my father's throne ;
 My subjects strangers, I a king unknown.
 They spoke with bated breath of Ethelred,
 As one 'twere best the least of him were said,—
 A coward who brought out his golden hoard
 To meet the Danes, and left behind his sword.
 Nor could Earl Godwin and his sons forbear
 From whisperings of him in each other's ear,
 Though he is father to my ill-starred queen,
 Telling of what my mother once had been.

Weary and sad of heart I wander here
 In this sweet season of the flowery year,
 While every breeze that fieldward has been straying
 Comes scented back like girls that have been Maying.
 And in the chase I now find no delight,
 My hounds crouch round me with the deer in sight,

My hawk sits moping in the silent mews
Eyeing the quarry he no more pursues.
My horses listless crop the vernal grass,
And never whinny at me when I pass.
For when I wander o'er these flowery meads
I mourn and meditate, and tell my beads,
And to the saints all day and night I pray
To drive from me the nightingales away ;—
Pray that their music may not haunt me so,
Causing my wavering thoughts to come and go ;
While every eddy of the shifting air
Sends forth their voices and beats back my prayer,
Like smoke which low-hung clouds do downward bend,
While it is ever struggling to ascend.

Hear me, ye saints ! I vow that holy pile
The heathen Danes destroyed on Thorney Isle*
I will rebuild, to gladden future eyes,
So stately shall the sacred structure rise,
If ye will drive the nightingales from here,
And let them never more in Havering Bower appear.

The prayer was answered, saintly legends tell,
Silent was every glade and bowery dell,
Though near nine hundred times the snow-white May
Bore crimson berries since they went away,
Yet never once when Spring came back to flower
Came nightingale with her to Havering Bower.

And ere Time's hand the abbey-tomb defaced
Might on it sculptured nightingales be traced,
With open beak, deep-throated, and raised breast,
As if they still were singing him to rest ;
So have we fancied oft when listening there
While the sweet anthem sounded low and clear.

T. M.

* The Island of Thorns was the old Saxon name of Westminster long before an abbey was erected.

PAUL GOSSLETT'S CONFESSIONS

IN

LOVE, LAW, AND THE CIVIL SERVICE.

MY FIRST MISSION UNDER F.O.

I was walking very sadly across the Green Park one day, my hat pressed over my eyes, not looking to right or left, but sauntering slowly along, depressed and heavy-hearted, when I felt a friendly arm slip softly within my own, while a friendly voice said—

“I think I have got something to suit you, for a few months at least. Don't you know Italian?”

“In a fashion, I may say I do. I can read the small poets, and chat a little. I'll not say much more about my knowledge.”

“Quite enough for what I mean. Now tell me another thing. You're not a very timid fellow I know. Have you any objection to going amongst the brigands in Calabria,—on a friendly mission, of course,—where it will be their interest to treat you well?”

“Explain yourself a little more freely. What is it I should have to do?”

“Here's the whole affair; the son of a wealthy baronet, a Wiltshire M.P., has been captured and carried off by these rascals. They demand a heavy sum for his ransom, and give a very short time for the payment. Sir Joseph, the youth's father, is very ill, and in such a condition as would make any appeal to him highly dangerous; the doctors declare, in fact, it would be fatal; and Lady Mary S. has come up to town, in a state bordering on distraction, to consult Lord Scatterdale, the Foreign Secretary, who is a personal friend of her husband. The result is that his lordship has decided to pay the money at once; and the only question is now to find the man to take it out, and treat with these scoundrels.”

“That ought not to be a very difficult matter, one would say; there are scores of fellows with pluck for such a mission.”

“So there are, if pluck were the only requisite; but something more is needed. If Sir Joseph should not like to acknowledge the debt,—if, on his recovery, he should come to think that the thing might have been better managed, less cost incurred, and so on,—the Government will feel embarrassed; they can't well quarrel with an old supporter; they can't well stick the thing in the estimates;

so that, to cover the outlay in some decent fashion, they must give it a public-service look before they can put it into the Extraordinaries; and so Lord S. has hit upon this scheme. You are aware that a great question is now disputed between the Bourbonists of Naples and the party of New Italy,—whether brigandage means mere highway robbery, or is the outburst of national enthusiasm in favour of the old dynasty. The friends of King Bomba, of course, call it a ‘*La Vendée*’; the others laugh at this, and say that the whole affair is simply assassination and robbery, and totally destitute of any political colouring. Who knows on which side the truth lies, or whether some portion of truth does not attach to each of these versions? Now, there are, as you said awhile ago, scores of fellows who would have pluck enough to treat with the brigands; but there are not so many who could be trusted to report of them,—to give a clear and detailed account of what he saw of them,—of their organisation, their sentiments, their ambitions, and their political views, if they have any. You are just the man to do this. You have that *knack* of observation and that readiness with your pen which are needed. In fact, you seem to me the very fellow to do this creditably.”

“Has Lord S. any distinct leanings in the matter?” asked I. “Does he incline to regard these men as political adherents, or as assassins ‘*purs et simples*’?”

“I see what you mean,” said my friend, pinching my arm. “You want to know the tone of your employer before you enter his service. You’d like to be sure of the tints that would please him.”

“Perhaps so. I won’t go so far as to say it would frame my report, but it might serve to tinge it. Now, do you know his proclivities, as Jonathan would call them?”

“I believe they are completely with the Italian view of the matter. I mean, he will not recognise anything political in these scoundrels.”

“I thought as much. Now as to the appointment. Do you think you could obtain it for me?”

“You are ready to take it, then?”

“Perfectly.”

“And ready to start at once?”

“To-night.”

“Come back with me now, and I will inquire if Lord S. will see us. He spoke to me yesterday evening on the matter, and somehow your name did not occur to me, and I certainly recommended another man;—Hitchins, of the *Daily News*; but I’m sure he will not have sent for him yet, and that we shall be in good time.”

As we walked back towards Downing Street my friend talked on incessantly about the advantages I might derive from doing this thing creditably. They were sure to make a Blue Book out of my report, and who knows if my name would not be mentioned in the House? At all events, the newspapers would have it; and the Government

would be obliged,—they couldn't help giving me something. "You'll have proved yourself a man of capacity," said he, "and that's enough. S. does like smart fellows under him, he is so quick himself; sees a thing with half an eye, and reads men just as he reads a book." He rattled along in this fashion, alternately praising the great man and assuring me that I was exactly the sort of fellow to suit him. "He'll not burden you with instructions, but what he tells you will be quite sufficient; he is all clearness, conciseness, and accuracy. There's only one caution I have to give you,—don't ask him a question, follow closely all he says, and never ask him to explain anything that puzzles you. To suppose that he has not expressed himself clearly is a dire offence, mind that; and now here we are. Crosby, is my lord upstairs?" asked he of the porter; and receiving a bland nod in reply, he led the way to the Minister's cabinet.

"I'll lead to see him first myself," whispered he, as he sent in his card.

Now, though my friend was an M.P. and a staunch supporter of the party, he manifested a considerable amount of anxiety and uneasiness when waiting for the noble secretary's reply. It came at last.

"Can't possibly see you now, sir. Will meet you at the House at five o'clock."

"Will you kindly tell his lordship I have brought with me the gentleman I spoke to him about yesterday evening? He will know for what."

The private secretary retired, sullenly, and soon returned to say, "The gentleman may come in; my lord will speak to him."

The next moment I found myself standing in a comfortably-furnished room, in front of a large writing-table, at which an elderly man with a small head, scantily covered with grey hair, was writing. He did not cease his occupation as I entered, nor notice me in any manner as I approached, but went on repeating to himself certain words as he wrote them; and at last, laying down his pen, said aloud, with a faint chuckle, "And your Excellency may digest it how you can."

I gave a very slight cough. He looked up, stared at me, arose, and, walking to the fire, stood with his back to it for a couple of seconds without speaking. I could see that he had some difficulty in dismissing the topic which had just occupied him, and was only arriving at me by very slow stages and heavy roads.

"Eh!" said he, at last; "you are the man of the paper. Not the Times—but the—the—what's it?"

"No, my lord. I'm the other man," said I, quietly.

"Ah, you're the other man." And as he spoke, he hung his head, and seemed hopelessly lost in thought. "Have you seen Mr. Hammil?" asked he.

"No, my lord."

"You must see Mr. Hammil. Till you see Mr. Hammil, you needn't come to me."

"Very well, my lord," said I, moving towards the door.

"Wait a moment. You know Italy well, I am told. Do you know Cavour?"

"No, my lord," said I.

"Ah! They say he over-eats; have you heard that?"

"I can't say that I have, my lord; but my acquaintance with Italy and with Italians is very slight indeed."

"Why did they recommend you, then, for this affair? I told Gresson that I wanted a man who could have ready access to their public men, who knew Balbi, Gino Capponi, Ricasoli, and the rest of them. Now, sir, how is it possible, without intimacy with these men and their opinions, that you could write such leading articles as I suggested in their papers? How could you ever get admission to the columns of the '*Opinione*' and the '*Perseveranza*,' eh? Answer me that."

"I am afraid, my lord, there is some grave misunderstanding here. I never dreamed of proposing myself for such a difficult task. I came here on a totally different mission. It was to take your lordship's orders about the ransom and rescue of a young Englishman who has been captured by the brigands in Southern Italy——"

"That scamp St. John. A very different business, indeed. Why, sir, they value him at one thousand pounds, and I'll venture to assert that his friends,—if that be the name of the people who know him,—would call him a dear bargain at twenty. I'm certain his own father would say so; but, poor fellow, he is very ill, and can't talk on this or any other matter just now. Lady Mary, however, insists on his release, and we must see what can be done. You know the habits and ways of these rascals,—these brigands—don't you?"

"No, my lord; nothing whatever about them."

"Then, in Heaven's name, sir, what do you know?"

"Very little about anything, my lord, I must confess; but as I am sorely pushed to find a livelihood, and don't fancy being a burden to my friends, I told Mr. Gresson this morning that I was quite ready to undertake the mission if I should be intrusted with it; and that, so far as bail or security went, my uncle Rankin, of Rankin and Bates, would unquestionably afford it."

"Ah, this is very different indeed," said he, ponderingly, and with a look of compassionate interest I had not thought his face capable of. "Gone too fast, perhaps; have been hit hard at Doncaster or Goodwood?"

"No, my lord; I never betted. I started with a few thousand pounds and lost them in a speculation."

"Well, well. I have no right to enter into these things. Go and see Mr. Temple, the financial clerk. Take this to him, and see what

he says to you. If he is satisfied, come down to the House to-night. But stay! You ought to start this evening, oughtn't you?"

"I believe, my lord, the time is very short. They require the money to be paid by the twelfth."

"Or they'll cut his ears off, I suppose," said he, laughing. "Well, he's an ugly dog already; not that cropping will improve him. Here, take this to Temple, and arrange the matter between you."

And he hurriedly wrote half a dozen lines, which he enclosed and addressed, and then returning to his seat, said, "Bonne Chance! I wish you success and a pleasant journey."

I will not dwell upon the much longer and more commonplace interview that followed. Mr. Temple knew all about me,—knew my uncle, and knew the whole story of my misfortunes. He was not, however, the less cautious in every step he took; and as the sum to be entrusted to me was so large, he filled in a short bail-bond, and, while I sat with him, despatched it by one of his clerks to Lombard Street, for my uncle's signature. This came in due time; and, furnished with instructions how to draw on the Paymaster-General, some current directions how to proceed till I presented myself at the Legation at Naples, and a sum sufficient for the travelling expenses, I left London that night for Calais, and began my journey. If I was very anxious to acquit myself creditably in this my first employment in the public service, and to exhibit an amount of zeal, tact, and discretion that might recommend me for future employment, I was still not indifferent to the delights of a journey paid for at the Queen's expense, and which exacted from me none of those petty economies which mar the perfect enjoyment of travelling.

If I suffer myself to dwell on this part of my history I shall be ruined, for I shall never get on; and you will, besides, inevitably,—and as unjustly as inevitably,—set me down for a snob.

I arrived at Naples at last. It was just as the day was closing in, but there was still light enough to see the glorious bay and the outline of Vesuvius in the background. I was, however, too full of my mission now to suffer my thoughts to wander to the picturesque, and so I made straight for the Legation.

I had been told that I should receive my last instructions from H.M.'s Minister, and it was a certain Sir James Magruber that then held that office at Naples. I know so very little of people in his peculiar walk, that I can only hope he may not be a fair sample of his order, for he was the roughest, the rudest, and most uncourtly gentleman it has ever been my fortune to meet.

He was dressing for dinner when I sent up my card, and at once ordered that I should be shown up to his room.

"Where's your bag?" cried he roughly, as I entered.

Conceiving that this referred to my personal luggage, and was meant as the preliminary to inviting me to put up at his house, I said

that I had left my "traps" at the hotel, and, with his permission, would instal myself there for the few hours of my stay.

"Confound your 'traps,' as you call them," said he. "I meant your despatches,—the bag from F.O. Ain't you the messenger?"

"No, sir; I am not the messenger," said I, haughtily.

"And what the devil do you mean, then, by sending me your card, and asking to see me at once?"

"Because my business is peremptory, sir," said I, boldly, and proceeded at once to explain who I was, and what I had come for. "To-morrow will be the tenth, sir," said I, "and I ought to be at Rocco d'Anco by the morning of the twelfth at farthest."

He was brushing his hair all the time I was speaking, and I don't think that he heard above half of what I said.

"And do you mean to tell me they are such infernal fools at F. O. that they're going to pay one thousand pounds sterling to liberate this scamp St. John?"

"I think, sir, you will find that I have been sent out with this object."

"Why, it's downright insanity! It is a thousand pities they hadn't caught the fellow years ago. Are you aware that there's scarcely a crime in the statute-book he has not committed? I'd not say murder wasn't amongst them. Why, sir, he cheated me,—me,—the man who now speaks to you,—at billiards. He greased my cue, sir. It was proved,—proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. The fellow called it a practical joke, but he forgot I had five ducats on the game; and he had the barefaced insolence to amuse Naples by a representation of me as I sided my ball, and knocked the marker down afterwards, thinking it was his fault. He was attached, this St. John was, to my mission here at the time; but I wrote home to demand,—not to ask, but demand,—his recall. His father's vote was, however, of consequence to the Government, and they refused me. Yes, sir, they refused me; they told me to give him a leave of absence if I did not like to see him at the Legation; and I gave it, sir. And, thank Heaven, the fellow went into Calabria, and fell into the hands of the brigands,—too good company for him, I'm certain. I'll be shot if he couldn't corrupt them; and now you're come out here to pay a ransom for a fellow that any other country but England would send to the galleys."

"Has he done nothing worse, sir," asked I, timidly, "than this stupid practical joke?"

"What, sir, have you the face to put this question to me,—to H.M.'s Minister at this court,—the subject of this knavish buffoonery? Am I a fit subject for a fraud,—a—a freedom, sir? Is it to a house which displays the royal arms over the entrance-door men come to play blackleg or clown? Where have you lived;—with whom have you lived;—what pursuit in life have you followed,—that you

should be sunk in such utter ignorance of all the habits of life and civilisation?"

I replied that I was a gentleman, I trusted as well educated, and I knew as well born, as himself.

He sprang to the bell as I said this, and rang on till the room was crowded with servants, who came rushing in under the belief that it was a fire alarm.

"Take him away,—put him out,—Giacomo,—Hippolyte,—Francis!" screamed he. "See that he's out of the house this instant. Send Mr. Carlyon here. Let the police be called, and order gendarmes if he resists."

While he was thus frothing and foaming I took my hat, and passing quietly through the ranks of his household, descended the stairs, and proceeded into the street.

I reached the "Vittoria" in no bland humour. I must own that I was flurried and irritated in no common degree. I was too much excited to be able clearly to decide how far the insult I had received required explanation and apology, or if it had passed the limits in which apology is still possible.

Perhaps, thought I, if I call him out he'll hand me over to the police; perhaps he'll have me sent over the frontier. Who knows what may be the limit to a Minister's power? While I was thus speculating and canvassing with myself, a card was presented to me by the waiter—"Mr. Sponnington, Attaché, H.M.'s Legation, Naples," and as suddenly the owner of it entered the room.

He was a fair-faced, blue-eyed young man, very short-sighted, with a faint lisp and an effeminate air. He bowed slightly as he came forward, and said, "You're Mr. Gosslett, ain't you?" And not waiting for any reply, he sat down and opened a roll of papers on the table. "Here are your instructions. You are to follow them when you can, you know, and diverge from them whenever you must. That is, do whatever you like, and take the consequences. Sir James won't see you again. He says you insulted him, but he says that of almost every one. The cook insults him when the soup is too salt, and I insulted him last week by writing with pale ink. But you'd have done better if you'd got on well with him. He writes home—do you understand?—he writes home."

"So do most people," I said, drily.

"Ah! but not the way he does. He writes home and has a fellow black-listed. Two crosses against you sends you to Greece, and three is ruin! Three means the United States."

"I assure you, sir, that as regards myself your chief's good opinion or good word are matters of supreme indifference."

Had I uttered an outrageous blasphemy, he could not have looked at me with greater horror.

"Well," said he at last, "there it is; read it over. Bolton will

cash your bills, and give you gold. You must have gold; they'll not take anything else. I don't believe there is much more to say."

"Were you acquainted with Mr. St. John?" asked I.

"I should think I was. Rodney-St. John and I joined together."

"And what sort of fellow is he? Is he such a scamp as his chief describes?"

"He's fast, if you mean that; but we're all fast."

"Indeed!" said I, measuring him with a look, and thinking to compute the amount of his colleague's iniquity.

"But he's not worse than Stormont, or Mosely, or myself; only he's louder than we are. He must always be doing something no other fellow ever thought of. Don't you know the kind of thing I mean? He wants to be original. Bad style that, very. That's the way he got into this scrape. He made a bet he'd go up to Rocco d'Anco, and pass a week with Stoppa, the brigand—the cruellest dog in Calabria. He didn't say when he'd come back again, though; and there he is still, and Stoppa sent one of his fellows to drop a letter into the Legation, demanding twenty-five thousand francs for his release, or saying that his ears, nose, &c., will be sent on by instalments during the month. Ugly, ain't it?"

"I trust I shall be in time to save him. I suspect he's a good fellow."

"Yes, I suppose he is," said he, with an air of uneasiness; "only I'd not go up there, where you're going, for a trifle, I tell you that."

"Perhaps not," said I, quietly.

"For," resumed he, "when Stoppa sees that you're a nobody, and not worth a ransom, he'd as soon shoot you as look at you." And this thought seemed to amuse him so much that he laughed at it as he quitted the room and descended the stairs, and I even heard him cackling over it in the street.

Before I went to bed that night I studied the map of Calabria thoroughly, and saw that by taking the diligence to Atri the next day, I should reach Valdenone by about four o'clock, from which a guide could conduct me to Rocco d' Anco—a mountain walk of about sixteen miles,—a feat which my pedestrian habits made me fully equal to. If the young attaché's attempt to terrorise over me was not a perfect success, I am free to own that my enterprise appeared to me a more daring exploit than I had believed it when I thought of it in Piccadilly. It was not merely that I was nearer to the peril, but everything conspired to make me more sensible to the danger. The very map, where a large tract was marked "little known," suggested a terror of its own; and I fell asleep at last, to dream of every wild incident of brigand life I had seen in pictures or witnessed on the stage.

As that bland young gentleman so candidly told me, I was a "no-

body," and consequently of no interest to any one. Who would think of sending out an express messenger to ransom Paul Gosslett? At all events I could console myself with the thought, that if the world would give little for me, it would grieve even less; and with this not very cheering consolation I mounted to the banquette of the diligence, and started.

After passing through a long, straggling suburb, not remarkable for anything but its squalor and poverty, we reached the sea-shore, and continued to skirt the bay for miles. I had no conception of anything so beautiful as the great sheet of blue water seen in the freshness of a glorious sunrise, with the white-sailed lateener skimming silently along, and reflected, as if in a mirror, on the unruffled surface. There was a peaceful beauty in all around, that was a positive enchantment, and the rich odours of the orange and the verbena filled the air almost to a sense of delicious stupefaction. Over and over did I say to myself, "Why cannot this delicious dream be prolonged for a lifetime? If existence could but perpetuate such a scene as this, let me travel along the shore of such a sea, overshadowed by the citron and the vine,—I ask for no more." The courier or conductor was my only companion,—an old soldier of the first empire, who had fought on the Beresina and in Spain,—a rough old sabreur, not to be appeased, by my best cigars and my brandy-flask, into a good word for the English. He hated them formerly, and he hated them still. There might be, he was willing to believe, one or two of the nation that were not cani; but he hadn't met them himself, nor did he know any one who had. I relished his savagery, and somehow never felt in the slightest degree baffled or amazed by his rudeness. I asked him if he had heard of that unlucky countryman of mine who had been captured by the brigands, and he said that he had heard that Stoppa meant to roast him alive, for that Stoppa didn't like the English,—a rather strong mode of expressing a national antipathy, but one, on the whole, he did not entirely disapprove of.

"Stoppa, however," said I, assuming as a fact what I meant for a question,—“Stoppa is a man of his word. If he offered to take a ransom, he'll keep his promise?”

"That he will, if the money is paid down in zecchin gold. He'll take nothing else. He'll give up the man; but I'd not fancy being the fellow who brought the ransom, if there was a light piece in the mass."

"He'd surely respect the messenger who carried the money?"

"Just as much as I respect that old mare who won't come up to her collar;" and he snatched the whip as he spoke from the driver, and laid a heavy lash over the sluggish beast's loins. "Look here," said he to me, as we parted company at Corallo, "you're not bad,—for an Englishman, at least,—and I'd rather you didn't come to trouble. Don't you get any further into these mountains than St.

Andrea, and don't stay even there too long. Don't go in Stoppa's way; for if you have money, he'll cut your throat for it, and if you haven't, he'll smash your skull for being without it. I'll be on the way back to Naples on Saturday, and if you'll take a friend's advice you'll be beside me."

I was not sorry to get away from my old grumbling companion; but his words of warning went with me in the long evening's drive up to St. Andrea, a wild mountain road, over which I jogged in a very uncomfortable barroccino.

Was I really rushing into such peril as he described? And if so, why so? I could scarcely affect to believe that any motives of humanity moved me;—still less any sense of personal regard or attachment. I had never known—not even seen—Mr. St. John. In what I had heard of him there was nothing that interested me. It was true that I expected to be rewarded for my services; but if there was actual danger in what I was about to do, what recompense would be sufficient? And was it likely that this consideration would weigh heavily on the minds of those who employed me? Then, again, this narrative, or report, or whatever it was, how was I to find the material for it? Was it to be imagined that I was to familiarise myself with brigand life by living amongst these rascals, so as to be able to make a Blue Book about them? Was it believed that I could go to them, like a census commissioner, and ask their names and ages, how long they had been in their present line of life, and how they throve on it? I'll not harass myself more about them, thought I at last. I'll describe my brigand as I find him. The fellow who comes to meet me for the money shall be the class. "*Ex pede Herculem*" shall serve one here, and I have no doubt I shall be as accurate as the others who contribute to this sort of literature.

I arrived at St. Andrea as the Angelus was ringing, and saw that pretty sight of a whole village on their knees at evening prayer, which would have been prettier had not the devotees been impressed with the most rascally countenances I ever beheld.

From St. Andrea to Rocco was a walk of seventeen miles, but I was not sorry to exchange the wearisome barroccino I had been jolting in for the last six hours, for my feet, and after a light meal of bread and onions, washed down with a very muddy imitation of vinegar, I set forth with a guide for my destination. There was not much companionship in my conductor, who spoke a patois totally unintelligible to me, and who could only comprehend by signs. His own pantomime, however, conveyed to me that we were approaching the brigand region, and certain significant gestures about his throat and heart intimated to me that sudden death was no unusual casualty in these parts. An occasional rude cross erected on the roadside, or a painted memorial on the face of a rock, would also attest some by-gone disaster, at the sight of which he invariably knelt and uttered a

prayer, on rising from which he seemed to me each time but half decided whether he would accompany me farther.

At last, after a four hours' hard walk, we gained the crest of a mountain ridge, from which the descent seemed nearly precipitous, and here my companion showed me by the faint moonlight a small heap of stones, in the midst of which a stake was placed upright; he muttered some words in a very low tone, and held up eight fingers, possibly to convey that eight people had been murdered or buried in that place. Whatever the idea, one thing was certain,—he would go no farther. He pointed to the zigzag path I was to follow, and stretched out his hand to show me, as I supposed, where Rocco lay, and then unslinging from his shoulder the light carpet-bag he had hitherto carried for me, he held out his palm for payment.

I resolutely refused, however, to accept his resignation, and ordered him by a gesture to resume his load and march on, but the fellow shook his head doggedly, and pointed with one finger to the open palm of the other hand. The gesture was defiant and insolent, and as we were man to man, I felt it would be an ignominy to submit to him, so I again showed signs of refusal, and pointed to the bag. At this he drew a long thin-bladed knife from his garter, but as quickly I pulled out a revolver from my breast-pocket. The fellow's sharp ear caught the click of the lock, and with a spring he darted over the low parapet and disappeared. I never saw him more.

A cold sweat broke over me as I took up my burden and resumed my way. There was but one path, so that I could not hesitate as to the road, but I own that I began that descent with a heart-sinking and a terror that I have no words to convey. That the fellow would spring out upon me at some turn of the way seemed so certain, that at each sharp angle I halted and drew breath for the struggle I thought was coming. My progress was thus much retarded, and my fatigue greatly increased. The day broke at last, but found me still plodding on in a dense pine-wood which clothed the lower sides of the mountain. In addition to my carpet-bag I had the heavy belt in which the gold pieces were secured, and the weight of which became almost insupportable.

What inconceivable folly had ever involved me in such an adventure? How could I have been so weak as to accept such a mission? Here was I, more than a thousand miles away from home, alone on foot in the midst of a mountain tract, the chosen resort of the worst assassins of Europe, and, as if to insure my ruin, with a large sum in gold on my person. What could my friend have meant by proposing the enterprise to me? Did he imagine the mountain-paths of the Basilicata were like Pall Mall? or did he,—and this seemed more likely,—did he deem that the man who had so little to live for must necessarily care less for life? If I must enter the public service,

thought I, at the peril of my neck, better to turn to some other means of living. Then I grew sardonic and malicious, declaring to myself how like a rich man it was to offer such an employment to a poor man, as though, when existence had so little to charm, one could not hold to it with any eagerness. The people, muttered I, who throw these things to us so contemptuously are careful enough of themselves. You never find one of them risk his life, no, nor even peril his health, in any enterprise.

As the sun shone out and lit up a magnificent landscape beneath me, where, in the midst of a wooded plain, a beautiful lake lay stretched out, dotted over with little islands, I grew in better humour with myself and with the world at large. It was certainly very lovely. The snow-peaks of the Abruzzi could be seen here and there topping the clouds, which floated lightly up from the low-lying lands of the valley. Often and often had I walked miles and miles to see a scene not fit to be compared with this. If I had only brought my colours with me what a bit of landscape I might have carried away. The pencil could do nothing where so much depended on tint and glow. A thin line of blue smoke rose above the trees near the lake, and this I guessed to proceed from the village of Rocco d' Anco. I plucked up my courage at the sight, and again set forth, weary and foot-sore it is true, but in a cheerier, heartier spirit than before.

Four hours' walking, occasionally halting for a little rest, brought me to Rocco, a village of about twenty houses, straggling up the side of a vine-clad hill, the crest of which was occupied by a church. The population were all seated at their doors, it being some festa, and were, I am bound to admit, about as ill-favoured a set as one would wish to see. In the aspect of the men, and indeed still more in that of the women, one could at once recognise the place as a brigand resort. There were, in the midst of all the signs of squalor and poverty, rich scarfs and costly shawls to be seen; while some of the very poorest wore gold chains round their necks, and carried handsomely ornamented pistols and daggers at their waist-belts. I may as well mention here, not to let these worthy people be longer under a severe aspersion than needful, that they were not themselves brigands, but simply the friends and partisans of the gangs, who sold them the different spoils of which they had divested the travellers. The village was in fact little else than the receptacle of stolen goods until opportunity offered to sell them elsewhere. I had been directed to put up at a little inn kept by an ex-friar who went by the name of Fra Bartolo, and I soon found the place a very pleasant contrast, in its neatness and comfort, to the dirt and wretchedness around it. The Frate, too, was a fine, jovial, hearty-looking fellow, with far more the air of a Sussex farmer in his appearance than a Calabrian peasant. He set me at ease at once by saying

that of course I came for the fishing, and added that the lake was in prime order and the fish plenty. This was said with such palpable roguery that I saw it was meant for the bystanders, and knew at once he had been prepared for my arrival and expected me. I was, however, more in need of rest and refreshment than of conversation, and after a hearty but hurried meal I turned in and fell off to sleep as I had never slept before. Twice or thrice I had a faint consciousness that attempts were made to awaken me, and once that a candle was held close to my eyes, but these were very confused and indistinct sensations, and my stupor soon conquered them.

"That's pretty well for a nap. Just nine hours of it," said the Frate, as he jogged my shoulder and insisted on arousing me.

"I was so tired," said I, stretching myself, and half turning to the wall for another bout.

"No, no; you mustn't go to sleep again," said he, bending over me. "He's come," and he made a gesture with his thumb towards an adjoining room. "He's been there above an hour."

"Do you mean——"

"Hush!" he said cautiously. "We name no names here. Get up and see him; he never likes loitering down in these places. One can't be sure of everybody in this world." And here he threw up his eyes, and seemed for a moment overwhelmed at the thought of human frailty and corruption.

"He is expecting me then?" said I.

"Very impatiently, sir. He wanted to arouse you when he arrived, and he has been twice in here to see if you were really asleep."

Something like a thrill ran through me to think that, as I lay there, this brigand, this man of crimes and bloodshed,—for of course he was such,—had stood by my bedside, and bent over me. The Frate, however, urging me to activity, left me no time for these reflections, and I arose quickly and followed him. I was eager to know what manner of man it was to whom I was about to make my approach; but I was hurried along a passage, and half pushed into a room, and the door closed behind me, before I had time for a word.

On a low settle-bed, just in front of me, as I entered, a man lay smoking a short meerschaum, whose dress and get up, bating some signs of wear and ill-usage, would have made the fortune of a small theatre. His tall hat was wreathed with white roses, from the midst of which a tall feather, spray-like and light, stood up straight. His jacket of bright green, thrown open wide, displayed a scarlet waistcoat perfectly loaded with gold braiding. Leather breeches, ending above the knee, showed the great, massive limb beneath to full advantage; while the laced stocking that came up to the calf served on one side as belt for a stiletto, whose handle was entirely incrustated with precious stones. "You are a good sleeper, Signor Inglese," said he, in a pleasant, richly-toned voice, "and I feel sorry to have disturbed you."

This speech was delivered with all the ease and courtesy of a man accustomed to the world. "You may imagine, however, that I cannot well delay in places like this. Rocco, I believe, is very friendly to me, but where there are three hundred people there may easily be three traitors."

I assented, and added that from what Fra Bartolo had told me, neither he nor his had much to fear in those parts.

"I believe so, too," added he, caressing his immense moustache, which came down far below his chin on either side. "We have between us the best bond of all true friendship,—we need each other. You have brought the ransom in gold, I hope?"

"Yes; in gold of the English mint, too."

"I'd rather have our own. The zecchin has less alloy than your coin, and as what we take generally goes into the crucible, the distinction is of value."

"If I had only known——"

"Never mind. It is too late now to think of it. Let us conclude the matter, for I wish to be away by daybreak."

I unfastened my waist-belt, and opening a secret spring, poured forth a mass of bright sovereigns on the table.

"I have such perfect reliance in your honour, signor," said I, "that I make no conditions—I ask no questions. That you will at once release my countryman, I do not doubt for an instant."

"He is already at liberty," said he, as he continued to pile the coin in little heaps of ten each. "Every step you took since you arrived at Naples was known to me. I knew the moment you came, the hotel you stopped at, the visit you paid to your minister, the two hours passed in the Bank, your departure in the diligence; and the rascal you engaged for a guide came straight to me after he left you. My police, signor mio, is somewhat better organised than Count Cavour's," said he, with a laugh.

The mention of the Count's name reminded me at once to sound him on politics, and see if he, and others like him, in reality interested themselves as partisans on either side.

"Of course," said he, "we liked the old dynasty better than the present people. A splendid court and a brilliant capital attracted strangers from all quarters of Europe. Strangers visited Capri, Amalfi, Paestum; they went here, and there, and everywhere. And they paid for their pleasures like gentlemen. The officials, too, of those days were men with bowels, who knew every one must live. What have we now? Piedmontese dogs, who are not Italians; who speak no known tongue, and who have no other worship than the house of Savoy."

"Might I venture to ask," said I, obsequiously, "how is it that I find a man of your acquirements and ability in such a position as this?"

"Because I like this life better than that of an 'Impiegato' with five hundred ducats a year! Perhaps I don't follow it all from choice. Perhaps I have my days of regrets, and such like. But for that, are you yourself so rightly fitted in life—I ask at random—that you feel you are doing the exact thing that suits you? Can you say, as you rise of a morning, 'I was cut out for this kind of existence—I am exactly where I ought to be?'"

I shook my head in negative, and for some seconds nothing was said on either side.

"The score is all right," said he, at last. "Do you know"—here he gave a very peculiar smile; indeed, his face, so far as I could see, beneath the shadow of his hat and his bushy beard, actually assumed an expression of intense drollery—"do you know, I begin to think we have made a bad bargain here!"

"How so?" asked I.

"I begin to suspect," said he, "that our prisoner was worth a much heavier ransom, and that his friends would willingly have paid four times this sum for him."

"You are entirely mistaken there," said I. "It is the astonishment of every one that he has been ransomed at all. He is a good-for-nothing spendthrift fellow, whom most families would be heartily glad to be rid of; and so far from being worth a thousand pounds, I believe nine out of ten parents wouldn't have paid as many shillings for him."

"We all liked him," said he. "We found him pleasant company; and he fell into all our ways like one of ourselves."

"A scamp was sure to do that easier than an honest man," said I, forgetting in my eagerness how rude my speech was.

"Perhaps there is truth in what you say, sir," said he, haughtily. "Communities like ours scarcely invite men of unblemished morals, and therefore I do not ask you to return with me."

He arose as he spoke, and swept the coin into a bag which he wore at his side. Still, thought I, he might tell me something more about these brigands. Are they partisans of the Bourbons, or are they mere highwaymen? Here is a man fully equal to the discussion of such a question. Shall I ask him to decide the matter?

"I see," said he, laughing, as I propounded my mystery. "You want to make a book about us; but our people don't understand that sort of curiosity; they distrust, and they occasionally resent it. Stay a week or ten days where you are. Fra Bartolo will feed you better than we should, and cram you with brigand stories better still. You'll find it far pleasanter, and your readers will think so too. Addio;" and he touched his hat in a half-haughty way, and strolled out. I sat down for an instant to recover myself, when the quick clatter of a horse's feet aroused me, and he was gone.

There was no doubt of it; he was a very remarkable man; one

who, in happier circumstances, might have made a figure in life, and achieved a conspicuous position. Who was he, whence came he? The Frate could tell me all these things. As the robber said, he could cram me admirably. I arranged at once to stay a week there. My week was prolonged to a fortnight, and I was well into the third week ere I shook his great hand and said good-bye.

During all this I wrote, I may say, from morning till night. At one time it was my Blue Book; at another I took a spell at stories of robber life. I wrote short poems—songs of the brigands I called them. In fact, I dished up my highwayman in a score of ways, and found him good in all. The portmanteau which I had brought out full of gold I now carried back more closely packed with MSS. I hurried to England, only stopping once to call at the Legation, and learn that Mr. St. John had returned to his post, and was then hard at work in the Chancellerie. When I arrived in London my report was ready, but as the ministry had fallen the week before, I was obliged to re-write it every word. Lord Muddlemore had succeeded my patron, Lord Scatterdale, and as he was a strong Tory, the brigands must be Bourbons for him; and they were so. I had lived amongst them for months, and had eaten of their raw lamb and drunk of their fiery wine, and pledged toasts to the health of Francesco, and “Morte” to everybody else. What splendid fellows I made them! Every chief was a La Rochejaquelin, and as for the little bit of robbery they did now and then, it was only to pay for masses for their souls when they were shot by the Bersaglieri. My Blue Book was printed, quoted by the Times, cited in the House; I was called “the intrepid and intelligent witness” by Disraeli; and I was the rage. Dinners fell in showers over me, and invitations to country-houses came by every post. Almost worn out by these flatteries, I was resolving on a course of abstinence, when a most pressing invitation came to a county gathering where Mr. St. John was to be of the party. I had never met him, and, indeed, was rather irritated at the ingratitude he had displayed in never once acknowledging, even by a few lines, the great service I had rendered him. Still I was curious to see a man whose figure occupied so important a place in my life’s tableau.

I went; but St. John had not arrived; he was detained by important affairs in town, and feared he should not be able to keep his promise. For myself, perhaps, it was all the better. I had the whole field my own, and discoursed brigandage without the fear of a contradiction.

A favourite representation with me was my first night at Roeco. I used to give it with considerable success. I described the village and the Frate, and then went on to my first sight of the renowned chief himself; for of course I never hesitated to call in Stoppa, any more than to impart to his conversation a much higher and wider reach than it actually had any claim to.

My "Stoppa" was pronounced admirable. I lounged, smoked, gesticulated, and declaimed him to perfection. I made him something between William Tell and the Corsican brothers, and nervous people wouldn't have seen him, I ween, for worlds.

On the occasion that I speak of, the company was a large one, and I outdid myself in my pains to succeed. I even brought down with me the identical portmanteau, and actually appeared in the veritable hat and coat of the original adventure.

My audience was an excellent one; they laughed where I was droll, and positively shrieked where I became pathetic. I had sent round little water-colours of the scenery, and was now proceeding to describe the inn of the Frate, and my first arrival there.

"I will not affect to declare," said I, "that it was altogether without some sense of anxiety—I might even say fear—that I approached the room where this man of crime and bloodshed awaited me. Stoppa! a name that brought terror wherever it was uttered, the word that called the soldiers to arms from the bivouac, and silenced the babe as it sobbed on its mother's breast. I entered the room, however, boldly, and advancing to the bed where he lay, said, in a careless tone, 'Capitano'—they like the title; —'capitano, how goes it?'"

Just as I uttered the words a heavy hand fell on my shoulder! I turned, and there—there at my side—stood Stoppa himself, dressed exactly as I saw him at Rocco.

Whether it was the terrible look of the fellow, or some unknown sense of fear, that his presence revived, or whether it was a terror lest my senses were deceiving me, and that a wandering brain alone had conjured up the image, I cannot say; but I fainted, and was carried senseless and unconscious to my room. A doctor was sent for, and said something about "meningitis." "I had overworked my brain, overstrained my faculties, and so forth;" with rest and repose, however, I should get over the attack. I had a sharp attack, but, in about a week, was able to get up again. As all were enjoined to avoid strictly any reference to the topic which it was believed had led to my seizure, and as I myself did not venture to approach it, days passed over with me in a half-dreamy state, my mind continually dwelling on the late incident, and striving to find out some explanation of it.

"Mr. St. John, sir, wishes to pay you a visit," said the servant one morning, as I had just finished my breakfast; and as the man retired St. John entered the room.

"I am sorry I gave you such a start the other evening," he began; but I could not suffer him to proceed; for, clutching him by the arm, I cried out, "For Heaven's sake, don't trifle with a brain so distracted as mine, but tell me at once, are you——"

"Of course I am," said he, laughing. "You don't fancy, do you, that you are the only man with a gift for humbug?"

"And it was to you I paid the ransom?" gasped I out.

"Who had a better right to it, old fellow? Tell me that?" said he, as he drew forth a cigar and lighted it. "You see, the matter was thus; I had lost very heavily at 'Baccarat' at the club; and having already overdrawn my allowance, I was sorely put to. My chief had no great affection for me, and had intimated to the banker that, if I wanted an advance, it would be as well to refuse me. In a word, I found every earth stopped, and was driven to my wits' end. I thought I'd turn brigand,—indeed, if the occasion had offered, perhaps I should,—and then I thought I'd get myself captured by the brigands. No man could complain of a fellow being a defaulter if he had been carried off by robbers. With this intention I set out for Rocco, which had got the reputation of being a spot in favour with these gentry; but to my surprise, on arriving there, I discovered Rocco was out of fashion. No brigand had patronised the place for the last three years or more, and the landlord of the White Fox told me that the village was going fast to decay. The Basilicata, in fact, was no longer 'the mode;' and every brigand, who had any sense of dignity, had betaken himself to the mountains below Atri. Fra Bartolo's account of Stoppa was not so encouraging that I cared to follow him there. He had taken a fancy of late for sending the noses as well as the ears of the captives to their friends at Naples, and I shrank from contributing my share to this interesting collection; and it was then it occurred to me to pretend I had been captured, and arrange the terms of my own ransom. Fra Bartolo helped me throughout—provided my costume, wrote my letters, and, in a word, conducted the whole negotiation like one thoroughly acquainted with all the details. I intended to have confided everything to you so soon as I secured the money, but I saw you so bent on being the hero of a great adventure, and so full of that blessed Blue Book you had come to write, that I felt it would be a sin to disenchant you. There's the whole story; and if you only keep my secret, I'll keep yours. I'm off this week to Rio as second Secretary, so that, at all events, wait till I sail."

"You may trust my prudence for a longer term than that," said I.

"I rather suspect so," said he, laughing. "They say that your clever report on brigandage is to get you a good berth, and I don't think you'll spoil your advancement by an indiscreet disclosure."

We parted with a hearty shake hands, and I never met him till ten years after. How that meeting came about, and why I now reveal this incident, I may relate at another time.

OUR ARMY AS IT IS, AND AS IT SHOULD BE.

EIGHTEEN months ago a Prussian army in one day scattered an Austrian army to the winds; and startled England stood amazed at the spectacle of four hundred thousand regular troops engaged in a single battle. But what had England to fear, even if the tide of war should surge her way? Our army was surely as brave and invincible now as it had been in the days of our forefathers. Had we not heard daily from the lips of distinguished officers in after-dinner speeches, and had not Commanders-in-Chief and Secretaries of State assured us over and over again, that all was well; nay, more, was it not written in the preamble of the Mutiny Act that the standing army of Great Britain was to consist of one hundred and thirty-eight thousand one hundred and seventeen men, for the safety of the United Kingdom, the defence of the possessions of Her Majesty's Crown, and the preservation of the balance of power in Europe? What more assurance could we want? And if we were rather rudely awakened from the little doze we had been taking since the Crimean and Indian wars, might we not safely turn round and take another forty winks, trusting to our brave and invincible hundred and thirty-eight thousand one hundred and seventeen soldiers, not to mention our militia and volunteers? There were some who said "No;" who urged that we were lulled to sleep by a false sense of security; that of our one hundred and thirty-eight thousand men, it would be the most we could do to collect thirty thousand in the whole United Kingdom, and that of those, thousands would be only half-trained recruits; that our militia and volunteers showed better on paper than on the battle-field; for that, however brave as individuals, they were utterly wanting, as indeed were our regular troops also, in any organisation beyond formation into battalions, the mere units of which armies are made; that our supply of recruits was running short, and that our troops were grumbling and discontented. These cavillers now came boldly to the front; the press took up the cry; and army-reform shouldered every other subject out of the way—for a time. But army reformers have had their day, and people have gone back to the comfortable habit of mutual and self-congratulation, and to the pleasing creed that England never can be ruined and conquered, for the good old reason of Mr. Plymley, because it would seem so very odd that it ever should be.

But, "softly," says the reader; "have we no reason for our change

of tone? Have we not had a Royal Commission on Recruiting, and a Committee on Military Administration, that have pointed out the way to set matters right, and has not their advice been accepted, to our great and complete benefit?" We have had a Royal Commission on Recruiting; it made a few sensible suggestions, but it never got beyond details; it was restricted by its orders to a small field of inquiry, and it failed to take a comprehensive view even of that. A small part only of its recommendations has been adopted, and the rest have been quietly shelved. We have had a Committee on the Military Administrative Departments, which was bold enough to ask leave to go beyond its original instructions, and which did make in March last a very valuable and comprehensive report;—but because its report was so bold and comprehensive, no action of any kind has followed.* The War Minister has promised to do something in the course of the coming session. After a year's deliberation what will that something be? All we can assert is, that there have been no such changes or improvements made as to render us any safer now than we were eighteen months ago.

The present Parliament is about to assemble again, and this is its last chance of showing what it is worth. Will it let the most flagrant faults in our military system pass from its hands unimproved? Will it perpetuate our system of recruiting, in the teeth of Mr. Whitbread's honest assurance that, when he heard the evidence given before the Commission of which he was a member, he blushed for very shame? Will it make no effort to prevent money passing over the head of merit, while the Trevelyans, father and son, have forced the Conservative Ministry to admit that the purchase system is false in theory? Is our system of military education, the foster-mother of cramming schools and outbreaks at Woolwich and Sandhurst, to remain unchanged, though exposed in all its true colours? Is nothing to be done to make the action of military law more certain and more uniform? Must the system of stoppages and payment, that worries the men, while it costs huge sums for clerks to keep it up, be looked upon as an immovable incubus? And finally, are we to be for ever saddled with the divided responsibility and double government of War Office and Horse Guards, in obedience to an obsolete theory, causing endless clashing and waste of time, while there is no real check on expenditure, and no arrangement for the administration of the affairs of an army in the field? To touch on some of these points, and urge their importance once more on the attention of Parliament and the public, to show in plain language how glaring are some faults which still exist, even if we do but repeat an oft-told tale, is our aim in this article; and without further preface we will go straight to our task.

* Since this was in type, the first step towards reform of the military administrative departments has been taken by the appointment of a Controller-in-Chief at the War Office.

If one branch of our military system needs reform more urgently than others, it is recruiting. Men cannot gather grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles, yet by our present recruiting system we are sowing thistles and planting thorns every day of our lives, and gathering their fruit in the shape of costly crime, sickness, and desertion. Let us look at this question in a manly and honest way, and see what we are really about. We do not go out into the open labour-market like other employers, and get men for our purpose simply by making it public that we want them; but we work on a system unknown elsewhere, offering payment to those who will find men for us, because, we say, men will not come without being hunted up. We divide and subdivide the United Kingdom into recruiting districts, and send out parties to obtain recruits; but it is specially ordered that no married man may be employed on this duty, and it is notorious that no commanding officer will send his best men on the recruiting service, because they are not likely to be successful recruiters, and are sure themselves to become deteriorated. Fine-looking fellows are selected, plausible in their manners, not troubled with too many scruples, and able to drink hard without being seriously affected by it;—and they are sent out with instructions to this effect: “Bring us men physically fit for the ranks; the more you get the better you will be paid; you shall have a given sum for every recruit, and whoever brings you one, he also shall be well paid.” To these instructions are added certain traditions that have been handed down from one recruiting party to another, the most prominent of which are that the head-quarters of the party must be at a public-house, and that it is no use to attempt to obtain men by telling the plain unvarnished truth about the army. These being the conditions, the levy-money given to the recruiting party for each recruit obtained has recently been raised from fifteen shillings to a pound or twenty-five shillings, thus perpetuating in its worst form the public-house system of recruiting, the curse of our army. The recruiting sergeant establishes himself at a public-house, he has money to spend, and he spends it freely up to a certain point,—which he knows well, for it is a simple calculation with him how much money spent on drink will on an average produce one recruit. The more levy-money he receives, the more drink he can afford to buy; drink is his right-hand in recruiting; by its aid he works his men up to the proper point for receiving his flaming accounts of a soldier's life; and by these two weapons, drink and falsehood, he brings down his bird.

We have recently seen a similar account of the present system of recruiting questioned in the columns of the press by some who professed to speak with authority and experience; we are therefore bound to prove that our statement does not go beyond the truth, and we can do so out of the mouths of witnesses of long experience, men

who would be the last to throw dirt upon a system which they are themselves engaged in superintending. Colonel Hope Graham, the inspecting field officer of the London recruiting district, stated, in his evidence before the Royal Commission, that recruiting is "entirely" conducted in public-houses, though he would not go so far as to say that those public-houses are "of the lowest description;" and he had "not the slightest doubt that parties detached from regiments for the purpose of recruiting become very much deteriorated in character and morals." Lord William Paulet, the Adjutant-General of the army, said, "I am afraid you would not get the same number of recruits if it was not for drink. I am afraid it is drink and being hard up which lead a great many of them to enlist." "When you send men out recruiting," he said, "you generally pick a smart, intelligent fellow, who is fond of drink . . . a jovial sort of fellow, and not a quiet, steady soldier." Captain Percy Lake said, "I think that the men who are enlisted are more or less under the influence of liquor, though I do not mean to say that they are so drunk as not to know what they are about." There is scarcely a page of the evidence that does not contain similar testimony. Mr. Haden said, "Reliance is seldom or never placed on any statement made by the recruiting sergeant." An old recruiting sergeant explained to the Commissioners how he had himself been taken in on enlistment, and how he afterwards took in others, and "drank himself into the good graces of the recruits before they would come;" and another witness, a sergeant of the Horse Artillery, declared his belief that if a clear and fair statement of advantages was put into the hands of every recruit, people would not believe it, because "so many falsehoods have been put about, and the men have been so humbugged in times past."*

Need we produce further proof that the system demoralises recruiters and recruits, that it is vile and abominable, and that no good fruit can come from such an evil tree? Think of the result. The recruiting party, paid for quantity, not for quality, of men, caring not how low they descend in the scale of vice, sweep into their net the worst characters as eagerly as the best. Once to land the men, and draw the money for them, is the great object;—never mind what may come of it all in the end. What matters it to them whether the recruit is likely to be a credit or a disgrace to the army, and whether he is enlisting to serve his country or to obtain a bounty and kit and then desert? What care they if they have cheated him into a longer servitude than that into which Laban beguiled Jacob? It matters nothing. They care nothing. But let the reader place himself in the position of the recruit, inveigled into a twelve years' service, good enough in its way, but very different from what he was falsely led to expect. "Let him make the best of it," people say; "he is better off than

* Evidence before Recruiting Commission, 1866, answers Nos. 49, 50, 82, 264, 276, 1199, 1399, 2294—2304, 2363, 3453, 3454, &c., &c.

most working men." Yes ; but think of the sting of being cheated ; the disappointment of bright hopes ; and then say if it is wonderful that, while 116,999 recruits joined the service in the seven years from 1859 to 1865, there were no less than 33,548 desertions in the same time, besides which 13,819 recruits absconded before passing into the ranks ; that there were, in fact, about five deserters for every twelve recruits through that whole period of seven years. And of those who elect to remain,—is it matter for wonder that they should so often rush into debauchery, and crime, and swell the lists of sick in hospital, and of offenders in the cells and military prisons ?

The evil of this state of things is almost universally admitted ; and there are many who, like ourselves, would sweep away such a foul stain on our national honour at any cost. But, on the other hand, there are many who care a great deal more about expediency than abstract justice, and who give only a qualified adhesion to the proverb that " honesty is the best policy." They say, " You must get men where you can find them ; we can get them from these places, by this method that you so strongly condemn, and by no other means ; besides, recruits have their eyes wide enough open, and are not so easily taken in as you would have us believe." We will answer the last part of this assertion first by stating a fact within our own personal experience. Some five years ago a recruiting sergeant in one of the most important districts, who had been employed for years on the same service, was suspected of some fraud, and on being taxed with it, immediately deserted. After his desertion, not only was it discovered that, in order to obtain small sums of money, he had many scores of times sworn falsely to the enlistment of fictitious recruits whom he alleged to have absconded, and that he had forged hundreds of signatures, magistrates', surgeons', and commanding officers', for the same end ;—but it came out that instead of giving each recruit the shilling, to which one would have supposed the veriest ploughboy must have known his right, he used only to touch their palms with it, and then put it back in his pocket. Surely this is proof enough that the way is easily found to cheat a recruit if the will is not wanting. For the rest, it is a mere question of raising the position of the soldier, till it is so good that turning him about his business is the heaviest punishment that can be inflicted on him. The moment this is done, recruits will want no hunting up. The police standard is a great deal higher than that of the army, and every man is required to produce a certificate of character ; but there is no need to hunt men up in public-houses ; they come forward in greater numbers than vacancies occur. Raise the soldier's position, and you may abolish your recruiting sergeant, levy-money, bringing-money, and bounties ; you may open in every district a respectable house where men may resort, bringing their proofs of character ; and, making sure that men have entered with their eyes

open, of their own accord, and because they know how valuable the service is, you may count on desertion disappearing, and on crime, perhaps even sickness, diminishing fast. Which would be really the most economical plan, and which kind of army the most likely to bring true glory to the nation, when it comes to the measurement of strength with an enemy?

We rejoice to be able to say that within the last few months an honest and simple statement of the advantages of a soldier's career has been issued from the Horse Guards, and circulated far and wide; but its effects are neutralised as long as the recruiting sergeant, the old familiar bird of prey, remains the medium through which the recruit has to be enlisted,—at all events as long as he is known by the recruit to have a direct pecuniary interest in obtaining men for the ranks. Sweep him and his belongings away; and if the present circular does not bid high enough, raise the terms till they command the required supply. By General Peel's advice, the soldier's pay has been raised twopence a day, and the number of recruits has been at once improved. Let us try a shilling a day, and see whether we cannot improve their class. Mr. Godley, the late Assistant Under-Secretary for War, drew up a memorandum on recruiting nearly ten years ago, advocating this policy. He was a deep-thinking man of great experience, and he reasoned thus;—At present the ranks receive only an inadequate supply of an inferior article, and for this there are but two remedies possible,—conscription, or making the army a desirable profession. Conscription being for obvious reasons put aside, there only remains the other course. Mr. Godley's specific was the reduction of the time of service to seven years, and the addition of a shilling a day to the soldier's pay, not to be given him to spend, but to be laid by in the savings-bank, at compound interest, and paid to him on discharge. A shilling a day at compound interest at three and a-half per cent. would amount to nearly £150 in seven years.

We cannot assent to the proposition to decrease the term of enlistment, so long as our troops are employed in India as they now are; for by the time a recruit is thoroughly trained, and fit for Indian service, a year or two of his time has elapsed, and the expense of relieving every man abroad at the end of five years would be enormous. Nor do we believe it would be necessary; for men will not object to bind themselves, as now, for twelve years, provided you can convince them they are about to enter a first-rate service. At present we cannot do so. The one thing wanted is to increase the advantages of the profession. If that were sufficiently attended to, men might be allowed to enlist for a year on probation, before taking the final step. There are different ways of improving the soldier's lot. Let us first dispose of the question of pay. Suppose, on Mr. Godley's plan, we were to put aside sixpence a day, for each man, to be paid with compound interest on his discharge. At the end of twelve years

there would be nearly £150 to his credit. If he entered the army at eighteen, at thirty years of age he could retire as a free man with this sum, a good education, and good habits of discipline. We would leave him the twopence a day lately added as pocket-money, and spend fourpence more on comforts to be indicated presently. The additional tenpence a day would cost the nation as nearly as possible £2,000,000 a year, roughly an addition of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to our present expenditure on the army. On the other hand what should we save? We should suppress bounties on enlistment, levy-money, and bringing-money, all no longer necessary. The pension list, except for wounds and injuries received on duty, would be abolished; for in place of a man's eightpence a day at the end of twenty-one years, he would receive £150 at the end of twelve. Desertion would almost cease to exist, for a man would have no claim on his reserve fund until his discharge, and not only would the terms we propose bring a class of men not likely to desert, but the loss of the reserve would powerfully deter men from desertion. Contingent allowance might be abolished, for Captains of companies could no longer have men deserting in debt beyond the amount of their reserve fund. The charges for military prisons, expenses of martial law, &c., could not fail to be largely diminished; and if a man were to desert, his reserve fund would be forfeited to the State. Mr. Godley, in his official position, and with his departmental knowledge, estimated the probable extra cost to the country of such a system as £357,000 per annum; but more than that has already been given in the extra twopence per diem, so that, if his estimates are correct, the experiment with the remaining tenpence would entail no extra expenditure. The ten years that have elapsed since he propounded his idea have probably made the terms of his equation not strictly correct, but the ratios would remain practically the same; and, whether there be some slight extra cost to the nation or no, should be small consideration compared with removing this foul blot from our escutcheon. We spend millions to save our honour in Abyssinia. We stain it every day by our recruiting at home. Let Mr. Godley speak from his grave;—

“Though I have argued this question on grounds of political expediency alone, in my own opinion the objections to our present system lie far deeper than any such grounds. I believe that system to be essentially evil, based on falsehood and fraud, and tending directly to infinite immorality. I believe that no thoughtful man can have observed the scenes that take place nightly at the taverns frequented by our recruiting staff, or at the head-quarters of a militia regiment on the day that volunteers for the line are called for, without feeling shame and disgust that such proceedings should form part of the recognised machinery of the British military service. I believe that a fearful responsibility rests upon a Government which deliberately scatters such temptations among the poorest and most helpless

classes of its people, and which for its own political ends takes advantage of their weaknesses and feeds their vices. And so believing, I cannot but hold that, at any pecuniary cost, such a system ought to be reformed or abolished."

Thus far we have only dwelt on the improvement of the soldier's pecuniary position; but there are certain additions to his bodily and mental comforts so urgently required, that without some improvement in this direction, no reasonable increase of pay would alone suffice. For instance, it is no use for the authorities to tell the men they are well fed, as long as they know that they are hungry. The recruiting commissioners reported the evidence given them in regard to the deficiency of the ration of meat to be "strong and conclusive," and they recommended an addition of 33 per cent. to the quantity now issued; but nothing has been done in the matter. Now, of all incentives to discontent, there is none fiercer than an empty stomach; and from inquiries we have ourselves often made among soldiers, old as well as young, we are convinced the daily mess rations are not sufficient to stave off hunger from recruits. "You see, sir, when a recruit comes up," said a soldier to us the other day, "if he's any decent sort of a chap, he's been used to have his belly full, and he don't like having it half empty. Some of 'em cuts home again, some of 'em spends their spare pay in grub and such like, but after a bit they finds bacey and drink keep the hunger off best, and they takes to them." We had a curious confirmation of this from a pie-man, who used to drive a good trade in a barrack where large numbers of recruits were till lately collected. We met him a short time since looking very much out at elbows, and his story was the same. "Since the recruiting has been slack here, I can't sell anything. Old soldiers don't want pies; they've learnt to keep the hunger out with something stronger; they would, most of 'em, sell their things for drink any day, if they could; but I never was one for smuggling liquor into the barracks." An increased meat ration would do away with hunger, and remove the craving for unhealthy deadeners of appetite. We have on the authority of Dr. Parkes that it would improve the physical condition of the men. We know it would help to allay discontent in the army. There are other matters perpetually irritating the men; the stoppages for sundry articles of kit, the fatigue jacket especially, for sea-kit on voyages abroad, and so on;—these, together with the small charges for browning arms, washing sheets, and other minor but none the less vexatious charges, would, as well as the extra ration of meat, be all covered by the expenditure at the rate of fourpence per man per day which we have suggested; and then the balance of daily pay over and above the ordinary deduction for messing would really go into the soldier's pocket, without melting away before reaching him.

But here we must pause to ask what necessity exists for paying the

soldier fifteenpence with the right hand, and with the left taking away at one time fourpence halfpenny, at another time tenpence, at another time sixpence, for food. Why must he receive a nominal pay that he never really touches, and have a perpetual complicated debtor and creditor account with the State, in the balancing of which he generally believes himself "done" in some way or other; an account that requires day-books and ledgers, to be kept by pay-sergeants, and quartermasters, and paymasters, and clerks innumerable, and that leaves the soldier ignorant what pay he will receive from day to day? Or why must an artilleryman's nominal pay be one and sixpence farthing, and his ration stoppage fourpence halfpenny, so that farthings enter into his accounts every day? We have never heard any valid or practical reason for the absurd prevailing system of keeping up these unnecessary accounts, or against the desirability of giving a soldier his ration free, and reducing his daily nominal rate of pay. There would be no difficulty in simplifying matters by giving the ration and a fixed rate of pay under all conditions, whether at home, abroad, in hospital, or on board ship, while the pay of a prisoner would cease, the prison authorities charging his ration direct to the public. There is nothing to prevent this useful reform but the *vis inertiae* of existing custom. Soldiers all wish for the change.

There are many other little vexatious annoyances that it would cost nothing to remedy, but whose removal would make the men more contented. Barrack damages, even under the new system of repair by the troops themselves, are often unreasonably high. At some stations there are standing barrack-damage jokes. There was an old coal-scuttle at one place where the troops were frequently changed, that was known to have been charged as destroyed to successive occupants of the quarters, but never replaced, till it was calculated the troops had paid over ten pounds for it; when one captain, of an impatient turn, made his men break it up and throw it into the water. In the late autumnal session of Parliament, the Secretary of State for War unblushingly said, that on short sea-voyages troops would rather sleep on bare boards than have blankets, because the charges for loss of blankets amounted to such heavy sums. As men cannot eat blankets, as it is improbable that they throw them overboard, and as they could not take them ashore to sell without detection, such charges must be purely vexatious. We might multiply examples of this nature, but must pass on to other points.

If the soldier were better paid, relieved from stoppages that worry him, fed well enough to keep off hunger, and assured that he was daily adding to his account in the savings-bank, there would be quite sufficient attraction in the service to draw, without any false and specious allurements, a large class of men who look to present bodily comfort beyond all things else, and who would form the main body of the army. No recruiting placard could rival the testimony of men

returning home with £150 in their pockets. It is, however, most desirable to attract a certain number of superior men, to form that essential portion of a sound military hierarchy, a well-educated and respectable body of non-commissioned officers, such as the ordinary private can look up to and respect, and such as will really form a strong connecting link between officers and men,—neither shrinking from the exercise of authority, nor above sympathising with the soldier's feelings. Such non-commissioned officers can seldom or never be found among those who have enlisted simply because, on weighing the soldier's and the ordinary working man's advantages, they have found the balance in favour of the former. They must come from a superior class, entering the service from pure desire for a soldier's life, with the ambition to rise in the profession, and the will to endure what to them is comparative hardship for a time, in order to obtain rank and honour in the future. At present we scarcely ever get such a recruit. We officer our army from the highest classes, we recruit the ranks from the lowest. We omit the intermediate class, the backbone of England's strength. Here it is that the States whose armies are recruited by conscription have so great an advantage over us, as our army is at present constituted. Conscription, if true to its creed, claims all alike, the highest and the lowest, the well-educated and the ignorant; but as soon as a payment of money is allowed to take the place of the personal service of the conscript, and substitutes, serving merely for gain, mercenaries in fact, take the place of the superior recruits, the character of the non-commissioned officers deteriorates. At the present moment France is an example of this. By the law of 1855, exoneration from service can be secured by a money payment, and the sums thus obtained have been expended by the State in bounties to old non-commissioned officers to induce them to re-engage at the end of their first term of service. The result is that the French and ourselves have from different causes reached the same end. The higher class of recruits has ceased to exist, non-commissioned officers of an inferior description are made; their re-engagement clogs promotion, and affords an additional bar to the enlistment of superior men. France is about to apply the remedy in the new Army Reorganisation Act; exoneration and the army dotation fund are to be abolished, bounties for re-engagement will cease to exist, and a flow of promotion will be secured. If re-engagement was less encouraged in our own army, we believe that material benefit would arise. Promotions from the station of private would be so much more rapid, that far greater inducements would exist for a better class of men to enlist. We hold that young soldiers, also, as a rule, are better than old soldiers;—that at four or five years' service, a soldier is well up to his work, from which time up to twelve years or so, he is in his prime; but that from that period he begins to decline. His faults are truly summed up by General Trochu, in his chapter on Young Soldiers and

Old Soldiers. He becomes hard to please, exacting, crotchety, a grumbler if you will, quick to complain, full of wants; besides, he is richer, and loves his ease. If he is led to the front in war time, he does his work vigorously, but at his own time and when it suits him. His vigour is unequal and capricious, and a body of these old soldiers who have done wonders to-day, will rest to-morrow on the strength of their reputation. He is sceptical and given to scoffing, incapable of experiencing grand emotions or being excited by great motives. His sentiments of delicacy change, and his scruples disappear by degrees. He becomes covetous, and to obtain the objects he desires, descends to unworthy and evil acts. But worst of all is the almost invariable love of drink that leads him on from bad to worse.

There would be no need to re-engage old soldiers, if the army were made as attractive as we propose, and if, by means of a daily increasing reserve fund, there were a certain provision for every man at the end of his first term of service. First-rate men, however, would not enlist if they were to be compelled to leave the army in twelve years. It must become a profession to which they can look as affording high prospects; and it can only be made so by opening the higher grades of the service to men from the ranks; in short, by giving them a large number of commissions. This is the great inducement to voluntary enlistment in the French army; this alone will ever give us a supply of valuable non-commissioned officers. The day is past when it was considered necessary that every officer should be highly born; for more than twelve years the Military Colleges have been open to any British subject who could pass the necessary examinations, and there is nothing to prevent the appearance some day of a detachment of well-educated Hindoos in the commissioned ranks of the army. Commissions are given to a certain extent to non-commissioned officers, but not according to any definite rule. If, as in the French army, one-third of all the commissions were given to non-commissioned officers who had proved themselves worthy, there would be a definite prize before the recruit,—something worth enlisting for. Nor is it only upon recruiting that this change would act with advantage. It would improve the relation between the officers and men. It would leaven the body of officers with so large a leaven of tried and earnest men, that good could not fail to result. Now, when a non-commissioned officer is promoted from the ranks, he is a kind of outcast from the society of his brother officers; but if a third of the officers had thus risen, such social ostracism could no longer exist. And, indeed, it is probable that a very superior class of men would be promoted. Now, when a non-commissioned officer is promoted, his expenses half ruin him, and he is obliged for one or two years to live more carefully than he did before promotion. Under our plan, his reserve fund would come to his aid.

But promotion to a commission is now of but small service to

the soldier. His pay is small, his expenses unbearably heavy ; and worse than all, he sees one youngster after another, good, bad, and indifferent, come in below him, and step up over his head by purchase. The purchase system is a direct recognition by the State of the superiority of money to merit. It is rotten in principle, and daily growing more faulty in practice. The subject has, however, been so recently thoroughly treated by Sir Charles Trevelyan in a pamphlet which may be bought for a shilling, that we do not propose to discuss it here. We never yet met with any one who did not admit that it would be well to abolish this system, though many persons object to the change on the ground that promotion would then be so hopelessly slow, that we should have none but old men in the higher ranks of the service,—and more to this effect. We answer to this as we do on the recruiting question,—if it be wrong, for Heaven's sake, sweep it away at any cost. But we would point to Sir Charles Trevelyan's remark as well worthy of attention, that "the key of the problem of army reform is to be found in providing proper means of retirement for military officers." Here, indeed, lies the whole question. If the entire army were to fall into the same hopeless state of stagnation as the Artillery and Engineers, we should, in abolishing purchase, be only supplanting a bad state of things by a worse ; but a scheme has been submitted to Parliament by Mr. Childers' select Committee for setting the retirement of these corps on a proper footing, and if the Government be only wise enough to try it, something will be learnt towards providing for the retirement of the whole army, when purchase is, as sooner or later it must be, abolished by acclamation. The chief difficulty in our opinion would be to exclude jobbery and parliamentary influence in the system of promotion to the higher ranks by selection, which must follow the abolition of the purchase system ; but public opinion is daily gaining more force over our administrative departments, and we can only trust to its exercising a wholesome criticism.

We have spoken of the smallness of the subaltern officer's pay, and the very heavy nature of his expenses ; and we may lay it down as an axiom that no subaltern officer can live on his pay, unless he entirely avoids the society of his comrades. The present rates of pay were arranged when the ordinary expenses of living were some fifty per cent. less than now ; but while the demands upon an officer's purse have largely increased, no improvement has been made in his pay. On the other hand, changes in the pattern of uniform have become more frequent, subscriptions to one fund or another are increased, the charges under the head of "mess guests" are growing, travelling allowances have been reduced, income-tax is charged upon lodging money, and here and there new petty imposts have been inflicted ; while, whenever a question arises as to an officer's title to any special remuneration, he is not met in a liberal spirit by the War Department. Our space is too limited to allow of our giving instances in

point; but many have been published within the last few months. We should never recommend making the army a highly paid service, but there should be sufficient pay for a man to live upon decently in the lower ranks. At present this is not the case.

Would that there were no weightier questions at issue in connection with our officers than that of pay; but while the system that educates them for the service is so faulty, we believe reform in that quarter is needed above all. No thoughtful man can fail to perceive that our system of military education must be wrong, unless he has shut his eyes and ears to the reports that from time to time reach the public ear. The first great evil of competitive examinations of a high class is the "cramming school." In former times a school was thought highly of or the reverse, according as it turned out not only scholars, but gentlemen. Now, so all-important has the special knowledge of crammers become to those who have boys to enter for Woolwich or Sandhurst, that so long as the teacher is known to be successful in passing his pupils, the manner in which his house is conducted counts for nothing. Numbers of young fellows contract their first habits of drinking, the bane of our military colleges, at these establishments, and by that and other vices often sow the seeds of disease deep in their constitutions. Then the examinations, conducted as they now are, are not true tests of a lad's ability. They are full of catch questions, and of book-work. They afford no real test of a knowledge of languages, little of the power of applying mathematics. And when once the student has entered the college, where he is supposed to learn habits of discipline, and knowledge to fit him for a soldier's career, what is really the case? Rules formed for boys are now loosely applied to young men,—so loosely, that punishment is uncertain, and discipline is at the lowest ebb. Of late years, by giving the students their way, there has been apparent calm; but this does not teach discipline;—witness the disturbances and defiance of authority recently shown at Sandhurst. The education is thus unpractical; and a cadet joins his regiment with little or no practical knowledge of his duties as an officer. He knows somewhat more of his drill than the boy who has been allowed to obtain a direct commission by purchase, after a farcical examination, straight from the cramming school; but in other respects they are alike. Neither one nor other knows the first principles of military law; both will attend a few courts-martial, and then will sit in judgment, filling the part of juryman and judge in one, on men whose reputation and future prospects are at stake. If we except the few who have passed through the Staff College, not an officer in our army has had any training in military law; yet in their hands is placed the power of life and death, and the solving of what are often very difficult cases. It is not only in General Courts-Martial that it is important to have a knowledge of the law, yet here only is a Deputy Judge

Advocate; and him we have often known to be an officer whose opinion was by no means the one we would elect to accept. The necessity of training a certain number of officers in the principles of evidence and military law, who should be appointed presidents of courts-martial, and sit as judges, while the members form a jury, is, we hope, beginning to be recognised. A Royal Commission is to be applied for in the coming session on military education; surely Parliament will not refuse the application. It affects us nearly all, for there is scarcely a family in the country that has not some relative in the army, in one rank or another; and we must all be interested in the success of our military institutions.

For those who are anxious for a reduction of military expenditure, who grumble over an outlay of fifteen millions annually for a small army on a peace footing, we have little to offer of consolation or of hope. England scouts the idea of conscription, the only possible means of obtaining a cheap standing army. Liberty, like most things that are really good, is dear; and if Englishmen will not pay in person for the defence of England's possessions, they must pay in purse. The more prosperous the country becomes, the higher will the wages of her soldiery require to be raised. There are men in the dockyards and arsenals now at work with their sleeves turned up, and grimy faces, who are earning higher pay than ensigns and lieutenants in the line. If expenditure can be reduced, we have the firm conviction that it is only by placing all our military institutions, recruiting and promotion especially, on a sound and honest footing. Then we may try where retrenchment can fairly be attempted. The number of our officers might be reduced without any ill effects: but their pay should be increased, and so on, it will be found throughout the service, that a retrenchment in one place will probably involve an outlay in another. There are, however, two points upon which it is impossible for us now to enter, as to which reform would lead, if not immediately, certainly after a time, to reduction of expense; these are our army administration, especially the double government of Horse Guards and War Office, and our army of reserve, the placing of which on a proper footing would add largely to our security, and enable us, it may be, to reduce the army estimates. Neither of these weighty points could be touched upon with adequate force at the close of an article, but Lord Elcho has promised to bring the one, and Mr. Otway the other, before the House early in the session. They are subjects well worthy of public attention. In the meanwhile we entreat the reader to bear in mind these two points as the chief lessons we have endeavoured to enforce, that, so long as our present system of purchase goes on, we are conniving at that worst of national sins,—the sale of office; so long as recruiting is on its present footing, we are carrying out the worst form of conscription,—that which is accomplished by cheating.

PHINEAS FINN, THE IRISH MEMBER.

CHAPTER XVI.

PHINEAS FINN RETURNS TO KILLALOE.

PHINEAS FINN's first session of Parliament was over,—his first session with all its adventures. When he got back to Mrs. Bunce's house,—for Mrs. Bunce received him for a night in spite of her husband's advice to the contrary,—I am afraid he almost felt that Mrs. Bunce and her rooms were beneath him. Of course he was very unhappy,—as wretched as a man can be; there were moments in which he thought that it would hardly become him to live unless he could do something to prevent the marriage of Lady Laura and Mr. Kennedy. But, nevertheless, he had his consolations. These were reflections which had in them much of melancholy satisfaction. He had not been despised by the woman to whom he had told his love. She had not shown him that she thought him to be unworthy of her. She had not regarded his love as an offence. Indeed, she had almost told him that prudence alone had forbidden her to return his passion. And he had kissed her, and had afterwards parted from her as a dear friend. I do not know why there should have been a flavour of exquisite joy in the midst of his agony as he thought of this;—but it was so. He would never kiss her again. All future delights of that kind would belong to Mr. Kennedy, and he had no real idea of interfering with that gentleman in the fruition of his privileges. But still there was the kiss,—an eternal fact. And then, in all respects except that of his love, his visit to Loughlinter had been pre-eminently successful. Mr. Monk had become his friend, and had encouraged him to speak during the next session,—setting before him various models, and prescribing for him a course of reading. Lord Brentford had become intimate with him. He was on pleasant terms with Mr. Palliser and Mr. Gresham. And as for Mr. Kennedy,—he and Mr. Kennedy were almost bosom friends. It seemed to him that he had quite surpassed the Ratlers, Fitzgibbons, and Bonteens in that politico-social success which goes so far towards downright political success, and which in itself is so pleasant. He had surpassed these men in spite of their offices and their acquired positions, and could not but think that even Mr. Low, if he knew it all, would confess that he had been right.

As to his bosom friendship with Mr. Kennedy, that of course troubled him. Ought he not to be driving a poniard into Mr. Kennedy's heart? The conventions of life forbade that; and therefore the bosom

friendship was to be excused. If not an enemy to the death, then there could be no reason why he should not be a bosom friend.

He went over to Ireland, staying but one night with Mrs. Bunce, and came down upon them at Killaloe like a god out of the heavens. Even his father was wellnigh overwhelmed by admiration, and his mother and sisters thought themselves only fit to minister to his pleasures. He had learned, if he had learned nothing else, to look as though he were master of the circumstances around him, and was entirely free from internal embarrassment. When his father spoke to him about his legal studies, he did not exactly laugh at his father's ignorance, but he recapitulated to his father so much of Mr. Monk's wisdom at second hand,—showing plainly that it was his business to study the arts of speech and the technicalities of the House, and not to study law,—that his father had nothing further to say. He had become a man of such dimensions that an ordinary father could hardly dare to inquire into his proceedings; and as for an ordinary mother,—such as Mrs. Finn certainly was,—she could do no more than look after her son's linen with awe.

Mary Flood Jones,—the reader I hope will not quite have forgotten Mary Flood Jones,—was in a great tremour when first she met the hero of Loughshane after returning from the honours of his first session. She had been somewhat disappointed because the newspapers had not been full of the speeches he had made in Parliament. And indeed the ladies of the Finn household had all been ill at ease on this head. They could not imagine why Phineas had restrained himself with so much philosophy. But Miss Flood Jones in discussing the matter with the Miss Finns had never expressed the slightest doubt of his capacity or of his judgment. And when tidings came,—the tidings came in a letter from Phineas to his father,—that he did not intend to speak that session, because speeches from a young member on his first session were thought to be inexpedient, Miss Flood Jones and the Miss Finns were quite willing to accept the wisdom of this decision, much as they might regret the effect of it. Mary, when she met her hero, hardly dared to look him in the face, but she remembered accurately all the circumstances of her last interview with him. Could it be that he wore that ringlet near his heart? Mary had received from Barbara Finn certain hairs supposed to have come from the head of Phineas, and these she always wore near her own. And moreover, since she had seen Phineas she had refused an offer of marriage from Mr. Elias Booker,—had refused it almost ignominiously,—and when doing so had told herself that she would never be false to Phineas Finn.

"We think it so good of you to come to see us again," she said.

"Good to come home to my own people?"

"Of course you might be staying with plenty of grantees if you liked it."

"No, indeed, Mary. It did happen by accident that I had to go to the house of a man whom perhaps you would call a grandee, and to meet grantees there. But it was only for a few days, and I am very glad to be taken in again here, I can assure you."

"You know how very glad we all are to have you."

"Are you glad to see me, Mary?"

"Very glad. Why should I not be glad, and Barbara the dearest friend I have in the world? Of course she talks about you,—and that makes me think of you."

"If you knew, Mary, how often I think about you." Then Mary, who was very happy at hearing such words, and who was walking in to dinner with him at the moment, could not refrain herself from pressing his arm with her little fingers. She knew that Phineas in his position could not marry at once; but she would wait for him,—oh, for ever, if he would only ask her. He of course was a wicked traitor to tell her that he was wont to think of her. But Jove smiles at lovers' perjuries;—and it is well that he should do so, as such perjuries can hardly be avoided altogether in the difficult circumstances of a successful gentleman's life. Phineas was a traitor, of course, but he was almost forced to be a traitor by the simple fact that Lady Laura Standish was in London, and Mary Flood Jones in Killaloe.

He remained for nearly five months at Killaloe, and I doubt whether his time was altogether well spent. Some of the books recommended to him by Mr. Monk he probably did read, and was often to be found encompassed by blue books. I fear that there was a grain of pretence about his blue books and parliamentary papers, and that in these days he was, in a gentle way, something of an impostor. "You must not be angry with me for not going to you," he said once to Mary's mother when he had declined an invitation to drink tea; "but the fact is that my time is not my own." "Pray don't make any apologies. We are quite aware that we have very little to offer," said Mrs. Flood Jones, who was not altogether happy about Mary, and who perhaps knew more about members of Parliament and blue books than Phineas Finn had supposed. "Mary, you are a fool to think of that man," the mother said to her daughter the next morning. "I don't think of him, mamma; not particularly." "He is no better than anybody else that I can see, and he is beginning to give himself airs," said Mrs. Flood Jones. Mary made no answer; but she went up into her room and swore before a figure of the Virgin that she would be true to Phineas for ever and ever, in spite of her mother, in spite of all the world,—in spite, should it be necessary, even of himself.

About Christmas time there came a discussion between Phineas and his father about money. "I hope you find you get on pretty well," said the doctor, who thought that he had been liberal.

"It's a tight fit," said Phineas,—who was less afraid of his father than he had been when he last discussed these things.

"I had hoped it would have been ample," said the doctor.

"Don't think for a moment, sir, that I am complaining," said Phineas. "I know it is much more than I have a right to expect."

The doctor began to make an inquiry within his own breast as to whether his son had a right to expect anything;—whether the time had not come in which his son should be earning his own bread. "I suppose," he said, after a pause, "there is no chance of your doing anything at the bar now?"

"Not immediately. It is almost impossible to combine the two studies together. Mr. Low himself was aware of that. But you are not to suppose that I have given the profession up."

"I hope not,—after all the money it has cost us."

"By no means, sir. And all that I am doing now will, I trust, be of assistance to me when I shall come to work at the law. Of course it is on the cards that I may go into office,—and if so, public business will become my profession."

"And be turned out with the Ministry!"

"Yes; that is true, sir. I must run my chance. If the worst comes to the worst, I hope I might be able to secure some permanent place. I should think that I can hardly fail to do so. But I trust I may never be driven to want it. I thought, however, that we had settled all this before." Then Phineas assumed a look of injured innocence, as though his father was driving him too hard.

"And in the mean time your money has been enough?" said the doctor, after a pause.

"I had intended to ask you to advance me a hundred pounds," said Phineas. "There were expenses to which I was driven on first entering Parliament."

"A hundred pounds."

"If it be inconvenient, sir, I can do without it." He had not as yet paid for his gun, or for that velvet coat in which he had been shooting, or, most probably, for the knickerbockers. He knew he wanted the hundred pounds badly; but he felt ashamed of himself in asking for it. If he were once in office,—though the office were but a sorry junior lordship,—he would repay his father instantly.

"You shall have it, of course," said the doctor; "but do not let the necessity for asking for more hundreds come oftener than you can help." Phineas said that he would not, and then there was no further discourse about money. It need hardly be said that he told his father nothing of that bill which he had endorsed for Laurence Fitzgibbon.

At last came the time which called him again to London and the glories of London life,—to lobbies, and the clubs, and the gossip of men in office, and the chance of promotion for himself; to the glare

of the gas-lamps, the mock anger of rival debaters, and the prospect of the Speaker's wig. During the idleness of the recess he had resolved at any rate upon this,—that a month of the session should not have passed by before he had been seen upon his legs in the House,—had been seen and heard. And many a time as he had wandered alone, with his gun, across the bogs which lie on the other side of the Shannon from Killaloe, he had practised the sort of address which he would make to the House. He would be short,—always short; and he would eschew all action and gesticulation; Mr. Monk had been very urgent in his instructions to him on that head; but he would be especially careful that no words should escape him which had not in them some purpose. He might be wrong in his purpose, but purpose there should be. He had been twitted more than once at Killaloe with his silence;—for it had been conceived by his fellow-townsmen that he had been sent to Parliament on the special ground of his eloquence. They should twit him no more on his next return. He would speak and would carry the House with him if a human effort might prevail.

So he packed up his things, and started again for London in the beginning of February. "Good-bye, Mary," he said, with his sweetest smile. But on this occasion there was no kiss, and no culling of locks. "I know he cannot help it," said Mary to herself. "It is his position. But whether it be for good or evil, I will be true to him."

"I am afraid you are unhappy," Barbara Finn said to her on the next morning.

"No; I am not unhappy,—not at all. I have a great deal to make me happy and proud. I don't mean to be a bit unhappy." Then she turned away and cried heartily, and Barbara Finn cried with her for company.

CHAPTER XVII.

PHINEAS FINN RETURNS TO LONDON.

PHINEAS had received two letters during his recess at Killaloe from two women who admired him much, which, as they were both short, shall be submitted to the reader. The first was as follows:—

"Saulsby, October 20, 186—.

"MY DEAR MR. FINN,

"I write a line to tell you that our marriage is to be hurried on as quickly as possible. Mr. Kennedy does not like to be absent from Parliament; nor will he be content to postpone the ceremony till the session be over. The day fixed is the 3rd of December, and

we then go at once to Rome, and intend to be back in London by the opening of Parliament.

"Yours most sincerely,

"LAURA STANDISH.

"Our London address will be No. 52, Grosvenor Place."

To this he wrote an answer as short, expressing his ardent wishes that those winter hymeneals might produce nothing but happiness, and saying that he would not be in town many days before he knocked at the door of No. 52, Grosvenor Place.

And the second letter was as follows :—

"Great Marlborough Street, December, 186—.

"DEAR AND HONOURED SIR,

"Bunce is getting ever so anxious about the rooms, and says as how he has a young Equity draftsman and wife and baby as would take the whole house, and all because Miss Pouncefoot said a word about her port wine, which any lady of her age might say in her tantrums, and mean nothing after all. Me and Miss Pouncefoot's knowed each other for seven years, and what's a word or two as isn't meant after that? But, honoured sir, it's not about that as I write to trouble you, but to ask if I may say for certain that you'll take the rooms again in February. It's easy to let them for the month after Christmas, because of the pantomimes. Only say at once, because Bunce is nagging me day after day. I don't want nobody's wife and baby to have to do for, and 'd sooner have a Parliament gent like yourself than any one else.

"Yours 'umbly and respectful,

"JANE BUNCE."

To this he replied that he would certainly come back to the rooms in Great Marlborough Street, should he be lucky enough to find them vacant, and he expressed his willingness to take them on and from the 1st of February. And on the 3rd of February he found himself in the old quarters, Mrs. Bunce having contrived, with much conjugal adroitness, both to keep Miss Pouncefoot and to stave off the Equity draftsman's wife and baby. Bunce, however, received Phineas very coldly, and told his wife the same evening that as far as he could see their lodger would never turn up to be a trump in the matter of the ballot. "If he means well, why did he go and stay with them lords down in Scotland. I knows all about it. I knows a man when I sees him. Mr. Low, who's looking out to be a Tory judge some of these days, is a deal better ;—because he knows what he's after."

Immediately on his return to town, Phineas found himself summoned to a political meeting at Mr. Mildmay's house in St. James's Square. "We're going to begin in earnest this time," Barrington Erle said to him at the club.

"I am glad of that," said Phineas.

"I suppose you heard all about it down at Loughlinter?"

Now, in truth, Phineas had heard very little of any settled plan down at Loughlinter. He had played a game of chess with Mr. Gresham, and had shot a stag with Mr. Palliser, and had discussed sheep with Lord Brentford, but had hardly heard a word about politics from any one of those influential gentlemen. From Mr. Monk he had heard much of a coming Reform Bill; but his communications with Mr. Monk had rather been private discussions,—in which he had learned Mr. Monk's own views on certain points,—than revelations on the intention of the party to which Mr. Monk belonged. "I heard of nothing settled," said Phineas; "but I suppose we are to have a Reform Bill."

"That is a matter of course."

"And I suppose we are not to touch the question of ballot."

"That's the difficulty," said Barrington Erle. "But of course we shan't touch it as long as Mr. Mildmay is in the Cabinet. He will never consent to the ballot as First Minister of the Crown."

"Nor would Gresham, or Palliser," said Phineas, who did not choose to bring forward his greatest gun at first.

"I don't know about Gresham. It is impossible to say what Gresham might bring himself to do. Gresham is a man who may go any lengths before he has done. Planty Pall,"—for such was the name by which Mr. Plantagenet Palliser was ordinarily known among his friends,—“would of course go with Mr. Mildmay and the Duke."

"And Monk is opposed to the ballot," said Phineas.

"Ah, that's the question. No doubt he has assented to the proposition of a measure without the ballot; but if there should come a row, and men like Turnbull demand it, and the London mob kick up a shindy, I don't know how far Monk would be steady."

"Whatever he says, he'll stick to."

"He is your leader, then?" asked Barrington.

"I don't know that I have a leader. Mr. Mildmay leads our side; and if anybody leads me, he does. But I have great faith in Mr. Monk."

"There's one who would go for the ballot to-morrow, if it were brought forward stoutly," said Barrington Erle to Mr. Ratler a few minutes afterwards, pointing to Phineas as he spoke.

"I don't think much of that young man," said Ratler.

Mr. Bonteen and Mr. Ratler had put their heads together during that last evening at Loughlinter, and had agreed that they did not think much of Phineas Finn. Why did Mr. Kennedy go down off the mountain to get him a pony? And why did Mr. Gresham play chess with him? Mr. Ratler and Mr. Bonteen may have been right in making up their minds to think but little of Phineas Finn, but Bar-

rington Erle had been quite wrong when he had said that Phineas would "go for the ballot" to-morrow. Phineas had made up his mind very strongly that he would always oppose the ballot. That he would hold the same opinion throughout his life, no one should pretend to say; but in his present mood, and under the tuition which he had received from Mr. Monk, he was prepared to demonstrate, out of the House and in it, that the ballot was, as a political measure, unmanly, ineffective, and enervating. Enervating had been a great word with Mr. Monk, and Phineas had clung to it with admiration.

The meeting took place at Mr. Mildmay's on the third day of the session. Phineas had of course heard of such meetings before, but had never attended one. Indeed, there had been no such gathering when Mr. Mildmay's party came into power early in the last session. Mr. Mildmay and his men had then made their effort in turning out their opponents, and had been well pleased to rest awhile upon their oars. Now, however, they must go again to work, and therefore the liberal party was collected at Mr. Mildmay's house, in order that the liberal party might be told what it was that Mr. Mildmay and his Cabinet intended to do.

Phineas Finn was quite in the dark as to what would be the nature of the performance on this occasion, and entertained some idea that every gentleman present would be called upon to express individually his assent or dissent in regard to the measure proposed. He walked to St. James's Square with Laurence Fitzgibbon; but even with Fitzgibbon was ashamed to show his ignorance by asking questions. "After all," said Fitzgibbon, "this kind of thing means nothing. I know as well as possible, and so do you, what Mr. Mildmay will say,—and then Gresham will say a few words; and then Turnbull will make a murmur, and then we shall all assent,—to anything or to nothing;—and then it will be over." Still Phineas did not understand whether the assent required would or would not be an individual personal assent. When the affair was over he found that he was disappointed, and that he might almost as well have stayed away from the meeting,—except that he had attended at Mr. Mildmay's bidding, and had given a silent adhesion to Mr. Mildmay's plan of reform for that session. Laurence Fitzgibbon had been very nearly correct in his description of what would occur. Mr. Mildmay made a long speech. Mr. Turnbull, the great Radical of the day,—the man who was supposed to represent what many called the Manchester school of politics,—asked half a dozen questions. In answer to these Mr. Gresham made a short speech. Then Mr. Mildmay made another speech, and then all was over. The gist of the whole thing was, that there should be a Reform Bill,—very generous in its enlargement of the franchise,—but no ballot. Mr. Turnbull expressed his doubt whether this would be satisfactory to the country; but even Mr. Turnbull was soft in his tone and complaisant

in his manner. As there was no reporter present,—that plan of turning private meetings at gentlemen's houses into public assemblies not having been as yet adopted,—there could be no need for energy or violence. They went to Mr. Mildmay's house to hear Mr. Mildmay's plan,—and they heard it.

Two days after this Phineas was to dine with Mr. Monk. Mr. Monk had asked him in the lobby of the House. "I don't give dinner parties," he said, "but I should like you to come and meet Mr. Turnbull." Phineas accepted the invitation as a matter of course. There were many who said that Mr. Turnbull was the greatest man in the nation, and that the nation could be saved only by a direct obedience to Mr. Turnbull's instructions. Others said that Mr. Turnbull was a demagogue, and at heart a rebel; that he was un-English, false, and very dangerous. Phineas was rather inclined to believe the latter statement; and as danger and dangerous men are always more attractive than safety and safe men, he was glad to have an opportunity of meeting Mr. Turnbull at dinner.

In the meantime he went to call on Lady Laura, whom he had not seen since the last evening which he spent in her company at Lough-linter,—whom, when he was last speaking to her, he had kissed close beneath the falls of the Linter. He found her at home, and with her was her husband. "Here is a Darby and Joan meeting, is it not," she said, getting up to welcome him. He had seen Mr. Kennedy before, and had been standing close to him during the meeting at Mr. Gresham's.

"I am very glad to find you both together."

"But Robert is going away this instant," said Lady Laura. "Has he told you of our adventures at Rome?"

"Not a word."

"Then I must tell you;—but not now. The dear old Pope was so civil to us. I came to think it quite a pity that he should be in trouble."

"I must be off," said the husband, getting up. "But I shall meet you at dinner, I believe."

"Do you dine at Mr. Monk's?"

"Yes, and am asked expressly to hear Turnbull make a convert of you. There are only to be us four. An *revoir*." Then Mr. Kennedy went, and Phineas found himself alone with Lady Laura. He hardly knew how to address her, and remained silent. He had not prepared himself for the interview as he ought to have done, and felt himself to be awkward. She evidently expected him to speak, and for a few seconds sat waiting for what he might say.

At last she found that it was incumbent on her to begin. "Were you surprised at our suddenness when you got my note?"

"A little. You had spoken of waiting."

"I had never imagined that he would have been impetuous. And

he seems to think that even the business of getting himself married would not justify him in staying away from Parliament. He is a rigid martinet in all matters of duty."

"I did not wonder that he should be in a hurry, but that you should submit."

"I told you that I should do just what the wise people told me. I asked papa, and he said that it would be better. So the lawyers were driven out of their minds, and the milliners out of their bodies, and the thing was done."

"Who was there at the marriage?"

"Oswald was not there. That I know is what you mean to ask. Papa said that he might come if he pleased. Oswald stipulated that he should be received as a son. Then my father spoke the hardest word that ever fell from his mouth."

"What did he say?"

"I will not repeat it,—not altogether. But he said that Oswald was not entitled to a son's treatment. He was very sore about my money, because Robert was so generous as to his settlement. So the breach between them is as wide as ever."

"And where is Chiltern now?" said Phineas.

"Down in Northamptonshire, staying at some inn from whence he hunts. He tells me that he is quite alone,—that he never dines out, never has any one to dine with him, that he hunts five or six days a week,—and reads at night."

"That is not a bad sort of life."

"Not if the reading is any good. But I cannot bear that he should be so solitary. And if he breaks down in it, then his companions will not be fit for him. Do you ever hunt?"

"Oh yes,—at home in county Clare. All Irishmen hunt."

"I wish you would go down to him and see him. He would be delighted to have you."

Phineas thought over the proposition before he answered it, and then made the reply that he had made once before. "I would do so, Lady Laura,—but that I have no money for hunting in England."

"Alas, alas!" said she, smiling. "How that hits one on every side!"

"I might manage it,—for a couple of days,—in March."

"Do not do what you think you ought not to do," said Lady Laura.

"No;—certainly. But I should like it, and if I can I will."

"He could mount you, I have no doubt. He has no other expense now, and keeps a stable full of horses. I think he has seven or eight. And now tell me, Mr. Finn; when are you going to charm the House? Or is it your first intention to strike terror?"

He blushed,—he knew that he blushed as he answered. "Oh, I

suppose I shall make some sort of attempt before long. I can't bear the idea of being a bore."

"I think you ought to speak, Mr. Finn."

"I do not know about that, but I certainly mean to try. There will be lots of opportunities about the new Reform Bill. Of course you know that Mr. Mildmay is going to bring it in at once. You hear all that from Mr. Kennedy."

"And papa has told me. I still see papa almost every day. You must call upon him. Mind you do." Phineas said that he certainly would. "Papa is very lonely now, and I sometimes feel that I have been almost cruel in deserting him. And I think that he has a horror of the house,—especially later in the year,—always fancying that he will meet Oswald. I am so unhappy about it all, Mr. Finn."

"Why doesn't your brother marry?" said Phineas, knowing nothing as yet of Lord Chiltern and Violet Effingham. "If he were to marry well, that would bring your father round."

"Yes,—it would."

"And why should he not?"

Lady Laura paused before she answered; and then she told the whole story. "He is violently in love, and the girl he loves has refused him twice."

"Is it with Miss Effingham?" asked Phineas, guessing the truth at once, and remembering what Miss Effingham had said to him when riding in the wood.

"Yes;—with Violet Effingham; my father's pet, his favourite, whom he loves next to myself,—almost as well as myself; whom he would really welcome as a daughter. He would gladly make her mistress of his house, and of Saulsby. Everything would then go smoothly."

"But she does not like Lord Chiltern?"

"I believe she loves him in her heart; but she is afraid of him. As she says herself, a girl is bound to be so careful of herself. With all her seeming frolic, Violet Effingham is very wise."

Phineas, though not conscious of any feeling akin to jealousy, was annoyed at the revelation made to him. Since he had heard that Lord Chiltern was in love with Miss Effingham, he did not like Lord Chiltern quite as well as he had done before. He himself had simply admired Miss Effingham, and had taken pleasure in her society; but, though this had been all, he did not like to hear of another man wanting to marry her, and he was almost angry with Lady Laura for saying that she believed Miss Effingham loved her brother. If Miss Effingham had twice refused Lord Chiltern, that ought to have been sufficient. It was not that Phineas was in love with Miss Effingham himself. As he was still violently in love with Lady Laura, any other love was of course impossible; but, nevertheless, there was something offensive to him in the story as it had been told.

"If it be wisdom on her part," said he, answering Lady Laura's last words, "you cannot find fault with her for her decision."

"I find no fault;—but I think my brother would make her happy."

Lady Laura, when she was left alone, at once reverted to the tone in which Phineas Finn had answered her remarks about Miss Effingham. Phineas was very ill able to conceal his thoughts, and wore his heart almost upon his sleeve. "Can it be possible that he cares for her himself?" That was the nature of Lady Laura's first question to herself upon the matter. And in asking herself that question, she thought nothing of the disparity in rank or fortune between Phineas Finn and Violet Effingham. Nor did it occur to her as at all improbable that Violet might accept the love of him who had so lately been her own lover. But the idea grated against her wishes on two sides. She was most anxious that Violet should ultimately become her brother's wife,—and she could not be pleased that Phineas should be able to love any woman.

I must beg my readers not to be carried away by those last words into any erroneous conclusion. They must not suppose that Lady Laura Kennedy, the lately married bride, indulged a guilty passion for the young man who had loved her. Though she had probably thought often of Phineas Finn since her marriage, her thoughts had never been of a nature to disturb her rest. It had never occurred to her even to think that she regarded him with any feeling that was an offence to her husband. She would have hated herself had any such idea presented itself to her mind. She prided herself on being a pure high-principled woman, who had kept so strong a guard upon herself as to be nearly free from the dangers of those rocks upon which other women make shipwreck of their happiness. She took pride in this, and would then blame herself for her own pride. But though she so blamed herself, it never occurred to her to think that to her there might be danger of such shipwreck. She had put away from herself the idea of love when she had first perceived that Phineas had regarded her with more than friendship, and had accepted Mr. Kennedy's offer with an assured conviction that by doing so she was acting best for her own happiness and for that of all those concerned. She had felt the romance of the position to be sweet when Phineas had stood with her at the top of the falls of the Linter, and had told her of the hopes which he had dared to indulge. And when at the bottom of the falls he had presumed to take her in his arms, she had forgiven him without difficulty to herself, telling herself that that would be the alpha and the omega of the romance of her life. She had not felt herself bound to tell Mr. Kennedy of what had occurred,—but she had felt that he could hardly have been angry even had he been told. And she had often thought of her lover since, and of his love,—telling herself that she too had once had a lover, never regarding her husband in that light;

but her thoughts had not frightened her as guilty thoughts will do. There had come a romance which had been pleasant, and it was gone. It had been soon banished,—but it had left to her a sweet flavour, of which she loved to taste the sweetness though she knew that it was gone. And the man should be her friend, but especially her husband's friend. It should be her care to see that his life was successful,—and especially her husband's care. It was a great delight to her to know that her husband liked the man. And the man would marry, and the man's wife should be her friend. All this had been very pure and very pleasant. Now an idea had flitted across her brain that the man was in love with some one else,—and she did not like it!

But she did not therefore become afraid of herself, or in the least realise at once the danger of her own position. Her immediate glance at the matter did not go beyond the falseness of men. If it were so, as she suspected,—if Phineas Finn had in truth transferred his affections to Violet Effingham, of how little value was the love of such a man! It did not occur to her at this moment that she also had transferred hers to Robert Kennedy, or that, if not, she had done worse. But she did remember that in the autumn this young Phœbus among men had turned his back upon her out upon the mountain that he might hide from her the agony of his heart when he learned that she was to be the wife of another man; and that now, before the winter was over, he could not hide from her the fact that his heart was elsewhere! And then she speculated, and counted up facts, and satisfied herself that Phineas could not even have seen Violet Effingham since they two had stood together upon the mountain. How false are men!—how false and how weak of heart!

“Chiltern and Violet Effingham!” said Phineas to himself, as he walked away from Grosvenor Place. “Is it fair that she should be sacrificed because she is rich, and because she is so winning and so fascinating that Lord Brentford would receive even his son for the sake of receiving also such a daughter-in-law?” Phineas also liked Lord Chiltern; had seen or fancied that he had seen fine things in him; had looked forward to his regeneration, hoping, perhaps, that he might have some hand in the good work. But he did not recognise the propriety of sacrificing Violet Effingham even for work so good as this. If Miss Effingham had refused Lord Chiltern twice, surely that ought to be sufficient. It did not as yet occur to him that the love of such a girl as Violet would be a great treasure—to himself. As regarded himself, he was still in love,—hopelessly in love, with Lady Laura Kennedy!

CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. TURNBULL.

It was a Wednesday evening and there was no House ;—and at seven o'clock Phineas was at Mr. Monk's hall door. He was the first of the guests and he found Mr. Monk alone in the dining-room. "I am doing butler," said Mr. Monk, who had a brace of decanters in his hands, which he proceeded to put down in the neighbourhood of the fire. "But I have finished, and now we will go up-stairs to receive the two great men properly."

"I beg your pardon for coming too early," said Finn.

"Not a minute too early. Seven is seven, and it is I who am too late. But, Lord bless you, you don't think I'm ashamed of being found in the act of decanting my own wine! I remember Lord Palmerston saying before some committee about salaries, five or six years ago now, I daresay, that it wouldn't do for an English Minister to have his hall door opened by a maid-servant. Now, I'm an English Minister, and I've got nobody but a maid-servant to open my hall door, and I'm obliged to look after my own wine. I wonder whether it's improper? I shouldn't like to be the means of injuring the British Constitution."

"Perhaps if you resign soon, and if nobody follows your example, grave evil results may be avoided."

"I sincerely hope so, for I do love the British Constitution; and I love also the respect in which members of the English Cabinet are held. Now Turnbull, who will be here in a moment, hates it all; but he is a rich man, and has more powdered footmen hanging about his house than ever Lord Palmerston had himself."

"He is still in business."

"Oh yes;—and makes his thirty thousand a year. Here he is. How are you, Turnbull? We were talking about my maid-servant. I hope she opened the door for you properly."

"Certainly,—as far as I perceived," said Mr. Turnbull, who was better at a speech than a joke. "A very respectable young woman I should say."

"There is not one more so in all London," said Mr. Monk; "but Finn seems to think that I ought to have a man in livery."

"It is a matter of perfect indifference to me," said Mr. Turnbull. "I am one of those who never think of such things."

"Nor I either," said Mr. Monk. Then the laird of Loughlinter was announced, and they all went down to dinner.

Mr. Turnbull was a good-looking robust man about sixty, with long grey hair and a red complexion, with hard eyes, a well-cut nose, and full lips. He was nearly six feet high, stood quite upright, and always wore a black swallow-tail coat, black trousers, and a black silk

waistcoat. In the House, at least, he was always so dressed, and at dinner tables. What difference there might be in his costume when at home at Staleybridge few of those who saw him in London had the means of knowing. There was nothing in his face to indicate special talent. No one looking at him would take him to be a fool; but there was none of the fire of genius in his eye, nor was there in the lines of his mouth any of that play of thought or fancy which is generally to be found in the faces of men and women who have made themselves great. Mr. Turnbull had certainly made himself great, and could hardly have done so without force of intellect. He was one of the most popular, if not the most popular politician in the country. Poor men believed in him, thinking that he was their most honest public friend; and men who were not poor believed in his power, thinking that his counsels must surely prevail. He had obtained the ear of the House and the favour of the reporters, and opened his voice at no public dinner, on no platform, without a conviction that the words spoken by him would be read by thousands. The first necessity for good speaking is a large audience; and of this advantage Mr. Turnbull had made himself sure. And yet it could hardly be said that he was a great orator. He was gifted with a powerful voice, with strong, and I may, perhaps, call them broad convictions, with perfect self-reliance, with almost unlimited powers of endurance, with hot ambition, with no keen scruples, and with a moral skin of great thickness. Nothing said against him pained him, no attacks wounded him, no raillery touched him in the least. There was not a sore spot about him, and probably his first thoughts on waking every morning told him that he, at least, was *totus teres atque rotundus*. He was, of course, a thorough radical,—and so was Mr. Monk. But Mr. Monk's first waking thoughts were probably exactly the reverse of those of his friend. Mr. Monk was a much hotter man in debate than Mr. Turnbull;—but Mr. Monk was ever doubting of himself, and never doubted of himself so much as when he had been most violent, and also most effective, in debate. When Mr. Monk jeered at himself for being a Cabinet Minister and keeping no attendant grander than a parlour-maid, there was a substratum of self-doubt under the joke.

Mr. Turnbull was certainly a great Radical, and as such enjoyed a great reputation. I do not think that high office in the State had ever been offered to him; but things had been said which justified him, or seemed to himself to justify him, in declaring that in no possible circumstances would he serve the Crown. "I serve the people," he had said, "and much as I respect the servants of the Crown, I think that my own office is the higher." He had been greatly called to task for this speech; and Mr. Mildmay, the present Premier, had asked him whether he did not recognise the so-called servants of the Crown as the most hard-worked and truest servants of the people. The House and the press had supported Mr. Mildmay, but to all that

Mr. Turnbull was quite indifferent ; and when an assertion made by him before three or four thousand persons at Manchester, to the effect that he,—he specially,—was the friend and servant of the people, was received with acclamation, he felt quite satisfied that he had gained his point. Progressive reform in the franchise, of which manhood suffrage should be the acknowledged and not far distant end, equal electoral districts, ballot, tenant right for England as well as Ireland, reduction of the standing army till there should be no standing army to reduce, utter disregard of all political movements in Europe, an almost idolatrous admiration for all political movements in America, free trade in everything except malt, and an absolute extinction of a State Church,—these were among the principal articles in Mr. Turnbull's political catalogue. And I think that when once he had learned the art of arranging his words as he stood upon his legs, and had so mastered his own voice as to have obtained the ear of the House, the work of his life was not difficult. Having nothing to construct, he could always deal with generalities. Being free from responsibility, he was not called upon either to study details or to master even great facts. It was his business to inveigh against existing evils, and perhaps there is no easier business when once the privilege of an audience has been attained. It was his work to cut down forest-trees, and he had nothing to do with the subsequent cultivation of the land. Mr. Monk had once told Phineas Finn how great were the charms of that inaccuracy which was permitted to the opposition. Mr. Turnbull no doubt enjoyed these charms to the full, though he would sooner have put a padlock on his mouth for a month than have owned as much. Upon the whole, Mr. Turnbull was no doubt right in resolving that he would not take office, though some reticence on that subject might have been more becoming to him.

The conversation at dinner, though it was altogether on political subjects, had in it nothing of special interest as long as the girl was there to change the plates ; but when she was gone, and the door was closed, it gradually opened out, and there came on to be a pleasant sparring match between the two great Radicals,—the Radical who had joined himself to the governing powers, and the Radical who stood aloof. Mr. Kennedy barely said a word now and then, and Phineas was almost as silent as Mr. Kennedy. He had come there to hear some such discussion, and was quite willing to listen while guns of such great calibre were being fired off for his amusement.

"I think Mr. Mildmay is making a great step forward," said Mr. Turnbull.

"I think he is," said Mr. Monk.

"I did not believe that he would ever live to go so far. It will hardly suffice even for this year ; but still, coming from him, it is a great deal. It only shows how far a man may be made to go, if only the proper force be applied. After all, it matters very little who are the Ministers."

"That is what I have always declared," said Mr. Monk.

"Very little indeed. We don't mind whether it be Lord De Terrier, or Mr. Mildmay, or Mr. Gresham, or you yourself, if you choose to get yourself made First Lord of the Treasury."

"I have no such ambition, Turnbull."

"I should have thought you had. If I went in for that kind of thing myself, I should like to go to the top of the ladder. I should feel that if I could do any good at all by becoming a Minister, I could only do it by becoming first Minister."

"You wouldn't doubt your own fitness for such a position?"

"I doubt my fitness for the position of any Minister," said Mr. Turnbull."

"You mean that on other grounds," said Mr. Kennedy.

"I mean it on every ground," said Mr. Turnbull, rising on his legs and standing with his back to the fire. "Of course I am not fit to have diplomatic intercourse with men who would come to me simply with the desire of deceiving me. Of course I am unfit to deal with members of Parliament who would flock around me because they wanted places. Of course I am unfit to answer every man's question so as to give no information to any one."

"Could you not answer them so as to give information?" said Mr. Kennedy.

But Mr. Turnbull was so intent on his speech that it may be doubted whether he heard this interruption. He took no notice of it as he went on. "Of course I am unfit to maintain the proprieties of a seeming confidence between a Crown all-powerless and a people all-powerful. No man recognises his own unfitness for such work more clearly than I do, Mr. Monk. But if I took in hand such work at all, I should like to be the leader, and not the led. Tell us fairly, now, what are your convictions worth in Mr. Mildmay's Cabinet?"

"That is a question which a man may hardly answer himself," said Mr. Monk.

"It is a question which a man should at least answer for himself before he consents to sit there," said Mr. Turnbull, in a tone of voice which was almost angry.

"And what reason have you for supposing that I have omitted that duty?" said Mr. Monk.

"Simply this,—that I can not reconcile your known opinions with the practices of your colleagues."

"I will not tell you what my convictions may be worth in Mr. Mildmay's Cabinet. I will not take upon myself to say that they are worth the chair on which I sit when I am there. But I will tell you what my aspirations were when I consented to fill that chair, and you shall judge of their worth. I thought that they might possibly leaven the batch of bread which we have to bake,—giving to the whole batch more of the flavour of reform than it would have possessed had I

absented myself. I thought that when I was asked to join Mr. Mildmay and Mr. Gresham, the very fact of that request indicated liberal progress, and that if I refused the request I should be declining to assist in good work."

"You could have supported them, if anything were proposed worthy of support," said Mr. Turnbull.

"Yes; but I could not have been so effective in taking care that some measure be proposed worthy of support as I may possibly be now. I thought a good deal about it, and I believe that my decision was right."

"I'm sure you were right," said Mr. Kennedy.

"There can be no juster object of ambition than a seat in the Cabinet," said Phineas.

"Sir, I much dispute that," said Mr. Turnbull, turning round upon our hero. "I regard the position of our high Ministers as most respectable."

"Thank you for so much," said Mr. Monk. But the orator went on, again regardless of the interruption:—

"The position of gentlemen in inferior offices,—of gentlemen who attend rather to the nods and winks of their superiors in Downing Street than to the interests of their constituents,—I do not regard as being highly respectable."

"A man cannot begin at the top," said Phineas.

"Our friend Mr. Monk has begun at what you are pleased to call the top," said Mr. Turnbull. "But I will not profess to think that even he has raised himself by going into office. To be an independent representative of a really popular commercial constituency is, in my estimation, the highest object of an Englishman's ambition."

"But why commercial, Mr. Turnbull?" said Mr. Kennedy.

"Because the commercial constituencies really do elect their own members in accordance with their own judgments; whereas the counties and the small towns are coerced either by individuals or by a combination of aristocratic influences."

"And yet," said Mr. Kennedy, "there are not half a dozen Conservatives returned by all the counties in Scotland."

"Scotland is very much to be honoured," said Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Kennedy was the first to take his departure, and Mr. Turnbull followed him very quickly. Phineas got up to go at the same time, but stayed at his host's request, and sat for a while smoking a cigar.

"Turnbull is a wonderful man," said Mr. Monk.

"Does he not domineer too much?"

"His fault is not arrogance, so much as ignorance that there is, or should be, a difference between public and private life. In the House of Commons a man in Mr. Turnbull's position must speak with dictatorial assurance. He is always addressing, not the House only, but the country at large, and the country will not believe in him

unless he believe in himself. But he forgets that he is not always addressing the country at large. I wonder what sort of a time Mrs. Turnbull and the little Turnbells have of it?"

Phineas, as he went home, made up his mind that Mrs. Turnbull and the little Turnbells must probably have a bad time of it.

CHAPTER XIX.

LORD CHILTERN RIDES HIS HORSE BONEBREAKER.

It was known that whatever might be the details of Mr. Mildmay's bill, the ballot would not form a part of it; and as there was a strong party in the House of Commons, and a very numerous party out of it, who were desirous that voting by ballot should be made a part of the electoral law, it was decided that an independent motion should be brought on in anticipation of Mr. Mildmay's bill. The arrangement was probably one of Mr. Mildmay's own making; so that he might be hampered by no opposition on that subject by his own followers if,—as he did not doubt,—the motion should be lost. It was expected that the debate would not last over one night, and Phineas resolved that he would make his maiden speech on this occasion. He had very strong opinions as to the inefficacy of the ballot for any good purposes, and thought that he might be able to strike out from his convictions some sparks of that fire which used to be so plentiful with him at the old debating clubs. But even at breakfast that morning his heart began to beat quickly at the idea of having to stand on his legs before so critical an audience.

He knew that it would be well that he should if possible get the subject off his mind during the day, and therefore went out among people who certainly would not talk to him about the ballot. He sat for nearly an hour in the morning with Mr. Low, and did not even tell Mr. Low that it was his intention to speak on that day. Then he made one or two other calls, and at about three went up to Portman Square to look for Lord Chiltern. It was now nearly the end of February, and Phineas had often seen Lady Laura. He had not seen her brother, but had learned from his sister that he had been driven up to London by the frost. He was told by the porter at Lord Brentford's that Lord Chiltern was in the house, and as he was passing through the hall he met Lord Brentford himself. He was thus driven to speak, and felt himself called upon to explain why he was there. "I am come to see Lord Chiltern," he said.

"Is Lord Chiltern in the house?" said the Earl, turning to the servant.

"Yes, my lord; his lordship arrived last night."

"You will find him upstairs, I suppose," said the Earl. "For

myself, I know nothing of him." He spoke in an angry tone, as though he resented the fact that any one should come to his house to call upon his son; and turned his back quickly upon Phineas. But he thought better of it before he reached the front door, and turned again. "By-the-bye," said he, "what majority shall we have to-night, Finn?"

"Pretty nearly as many as you please to name, my lord," said Phineas.

"Well;—yes; I suppose we are tolerably safe. You ought to speak upon it."

"Perhaps I may," said Phineas, feeling that he blushed as he spoke.

"Do," said the Earl. "Do. If you see Lord Chiltern will you tell him from me that I should be glad to see him before he leaves London. I shall be at home till noon to-morrow." Phineas, much astonished at the commission given to him, of course said that he would do as he was desired, and then passed on to Lord Chiltern's apartments.

He found his friend standing in the middle of the room, without coat and waistcoat, with a pair of dumb-bells in his hands. "When there's no hunting I'm driven to this kind of thing," said Lord Chiltern.

"I suppose it's good exercise," said Phineas.

"And it gives me something to do. When I'm in London I feel like a gipsy in church, till the time comes for prowling out at night. I've no occupation for my days whatever, and no place to which I can take myself. I can't stand in a club window as some men do, and I should disgrace any decent club if I did stand there. I belong to the Travellers, but I doubt whether the porter would let me go in."

"I think you pique yourself on being more of an outer Bohemian than you are," said Phineas.

"I pique myself on this, that whether Bohemian or not, I will go nowhere that I am not wanted. Though,—for the matter of that, I suppose I'm not wanted here." Then Phineas gave him the message from his father. "He wishes to see me to-morrow morning?" continued Lord Chiltern. "Let him send me word what it is he has to say to me. I do not choose to be insulted by him, though he is my father."

"I would certainly go, if I were you."

"I doubt it very much, if all the circumstances were the same. Let him tell me what he wants."

"Of course I cannot ask him, Chiltern."

"I know what he wants very well. Laura has been interfering and doing no good. You know Violet Effingham?"

"Yes; I know her," said Phineas, much surprised.

"They want her to marry me."

"And you do not wish to marry her?"

"I did not say that. But do you think that such a girl as Miss Effingham would marry such a man as I am? She would be much more likely to take you. By George, she would! Do you know that she has three thousand a year of her own?"

"I know that she has money."

"That's about the tune of it. I would take her without a shilling to-morrow, if she would have me,—because I like her. She is the only girl I ever did like. But what is the use of my liking her? They have painted me so black among them, especially my father, that no decent girl would think of marrying me."

"Your father can't be angry with you if you do your best to comply with his wishes."

"I don't care a straw whether he be angry or not. He allows me eight hundred a year, and he knows that if he stopped it I should go to the Jews the next day. I could not help myself. He can't leave an acre away from me, and yet he won't join me in raising money for the sake of paying Laura her fortune."

"Lady Laura can hardly want money now."

"That detestable prig whom she has chosen to marry, and whom I hate with all my heart, is richer than ever Cræsus was; but nevertheless Laura ought to have her own money. She shall have it some day."

"I would see Lord Brentford, if I were you."

"I will think about it. Now tell me about coming down to Willingford. Laura says you will come some day in March. I can mount you for a couple of days and should be delighted to have you. My horses all pull like the mischief, and rush like devils, and want a deal of riding; but an Irishman likes that."

"I do not dislike it particularly."

"I like it. I prefer to have something to do on horseback. When a man tells me that a horse is an armchair, I always tell him to put the brute into his bedroom. Mind you come. The house I stay at is called the Willingford Bull, and it's just four miles from Peterborough." Phineas swore that he would go down and ride the pulling horses, and then took his leave, earnestly advising Lord Chiltern, as he went, to keep the appointment proposed by his father.

When the morning came, at half-past eleven, the son, who had been standing for half an hour with his back to the fire in the large gloomy dining-room, suddenly rang the bell. "Tell the Earl," he said to the servant, "that I am here, and will go to him if he wishes it." The servant came back, and said that the Earl was waiting. Then Lord Chiltern strode after the man into his father's room.

"Oswald," said the father, "I have sent for you because I think it may be as well to speak to you on some business. Will you sit down?" Lord Chiltern sat down, but did not answer a word. "I feel very unhappy about your sister's fortune," said the Earl.

"So do I,—very unhappy. We can raise the money between us, and pay her to-morrow, if you please it."

"It was in opposition to my advice that she paid your debts."

"And in opposition to mine too."

"I told her that I would not pay them, and were I to give her back to-morrow, as you say, the money that she has so used, I should be stultifying myself. But I will do so on one condition. I will join with you in raising the money for your sister, on one condition."

"What is that?"

"Laura tells me,—indeed she has told me often,—that you are attached to Violet Effingham."

"But Violet Effingham, my lord, is unhappily not attached to me."

"I do not know how that may be. Of course I cannot say. I have never taken the liberty of interrogating her upon the subject."

"Even you, my lord, could hardly have done that."

"What do you mean by that? I say that I never have," said the Earl, angrily.

"I simply mean that even you could hardly have asked Miss Effingham such a question. I have asked her, and she has refused me."

"But girls often do that, and yet accept afterwards the men whom they have refused. Laura tells me that she believes that Violet would consent if you pressed your suit."

"Laura knows nothing about it, my lord."

"There you are probably wrong. Laura and Violet are very close friends, and have no doubt discussed this matter among them. At any rate, it may be as well that you should hear what I have to say. Of course I shall not interfere myself. There is no ground on which I can do so with propriety."

"None whatever," said Lord Chiltern.

The Earl became very angry, and nearly broke down in his anger. He paused for a moment, feeling disposed to tell his son to go and never to see him again. But he gulped down his wrath, and went on with his speech. "My meaning, sir, is this;—that I have so great faith in Violet Effingham, that I would receive her acceptance of your hand as the only proof which would be convincing to me of amendment in your mode of life. If she were to do so, I would join with you in raising money to pay your sister, would make some further sacrifice with reference to an income for you and your wife, and—would make you both welcome to Saulsby,—if you chose to come." The Earl's voice hesitated much, and became almost tremulous as he made the last proposition. And his eyes had fallen away from his son's gaze, and he had bent a little over the table, and was moved. But he recovered himself at once, and added, with all proper dignity, "If you have anything to say I shall be glad to hear it."

"All your offers would be nothing, my lord, if I did not like the girl."

"I should not ask you to marry a girl if you did not like her, as you call it."

"But as to Miss Effingham, it happens that our wishes jump together. I have asked her, and she has refused me. I don't even know where to find her to ask her again. If I went to Lady Baldock's house the servants would not let me in."

"And whose fault is that?"

"Yours partly, my lord. You have told everybody that I am the devil,—and now all the old women believe it."

"I never told anybody so."

"I'll tell you what I'll do. I will go down to Lady Baldock's to-day. I suppose she is at Baddingham. And if I can get speech of Miss Effingham——"

"Miss Effingham is not at Baddingham. Miss Effingham is staying with your sister in Grosvenor Place. I saw her yesterday."

"She is in London?"

"I tell you that I saw her yesterday."

"Very well, my lord. Then I will do the best I can. Laura will tell you of the result."

The father would have given the son some advice as to the mode in which he should put forward his claim upon Violet's hand, but the son would not wait to hear it. Choosing to presume that the conference was over, he went back to the room in which he kept his dumb-bells, and for a minute or two went to work at his favourite exercise. But he soon put the dumb-bells down, and began to prepare himself for his work. If this thing was to be done, it might as well be done at once. He looked out of his window, and saw that the streets were in a mess of slush. White snow was becoming black mud, as it will do in London; and the violence of frost was giving way to the horrors of thaw. All would be soft and comparatively pleasant in Northamptonshire on the following morning, and if everything went right he would breakfast at the Willingford Bull. He would go down by the hunting train, and be at the inn by ten. The meet was only six miles distant, and all would be pleasant. He would do this whatever might be the result of his work to-day;—but in the meantime he would go and do his work. He had a cab called, and within half an hour of the time at which he had left his father, he was at the door of his sister's house in Grosvenor Place. The servants told him that the ladies were at lunch. "I can't eat lunch," he said. "Tell them that I am in the drawing-room."

"He has come to see you," said Lady Laura, as soon as the servant had left the room.

"I hope not," said Violet.

"Do not say that."

"But I do say it. I hope he has not come to see me;—that is,

not to see me specially. Of course I cannot pretend not to know what you mean."

"He may think it civil to call if he has heard that you are in town," said Lady Laura, after a pause.

"If it be only that, I will be civil in return;—as sweet as May to him. If it be really only that, and if I were sure of it, I should be really glad to see him." Then they finished their lunch, and Lady Laura got up and led the way to the drawing-room.

"I hope you remember," said she, gravely, "that you might be a saviour to him."

"I do not believe in girls being saviours to men. It is the man who should be the saviour to the girl. If I marry at all, I have the right to expect that protection shall be given to me,—not that I shall have to give it."

"Violet, you are determined to misrepresent what I mean."

Lord Chiltern was walking about the room, and did not sit down when they entered. The ordinary greetings took place, and Miss Effingham made some remark about the frost. "But it seems to be going," she said, "and I suppose that you will soon be at work again?"

"Yes;—I shall hunt to-morrow," said Lord Chiltern.

"And the next day, and the next, and the next," said Violet, "till about the middle of April;—and then your period of misery will begin!"

"Exactly," said Lord Chiltern. "I have nothing but hunting that I can call an occupation."

"Why don't you make one?" said his sister.

"I mean to do so, if it be possible. Laura, would you mind leaving me and Miss Effingham alone for a few minutes?"

Lady Laura got up, and so also did Miss Effingham. "For what purpose?" said the latter. "It cannot be for any good purpose."

"At any rate I wish it, and I will not harm you." Lady Laura was now going, but paused before she reached the door. "Laura, will you do as I ask you?" said the brother. Then Lady Laura went.

"It was not that I feared you would harm me, Lord Chiltern," said Violet.

"No;—I know it was not. But what I say is always said awkwardly. An hour ago I did not know that you were in town, but when I was told the news I came at once. My father told me."

"I am so glad that you see your father."

"I have not spoken to him for months before, and probably may not speak to him for months again. But there is one point, Violet, on which he and I agree."

"I hope there will soon be many."

"It is possible,—but I fear not probable. Look here, Violet,"—and he looked at her with all his eyes, till it seemed to her that he was all eyes, so great was the intensity of his gaze;—"I should

scorn myself were I to permit myself to come before you with a plea for your favour founded on my father's whims. My father is unreasonable, and has been very unjust to me. He has ever believed evil of me, and has believed it often when all the world knew that he was wrong. I care little for being reconciled to a father who has been so cruel to me."

"He loves me dearly, and is my friend. I would rather that you should not speak against him to me."

"You will understand, at least, that I am asking nothing from you because he wishes it. Laura probably has told you that you may make things straight by becoming my wife."

"She has,—certainly, Lord Chiltern."

"It is an argument that she should never have used. It is an argument to which you should not listen for a moment. Make things straight, indeed! Who can tell? There would be very little made straight by such a marriage, if it were not that I loved you. Violet, that is my plea, and my only one. I love you so well that I do believe that if you took me I should return to the old ways, and become as other men are, and be in time as respectable, as stupid,—and perhaps as ill-natured as old Lady Baldock herself."

"My poor aunt!"

"You know she says worse things of me than that. Now, dearest, you have heard all that I have to say to you." As he spoke he came close to her, and put out his hand,—but she did not touch it. "I have no other argument to use,—not a word more to say. As I came here in the cab I was turning it over in my mind that I might find what best I should say. But, after all, there is nothing more to be said than that."

"The words make no difference," she replied.

"Not unless they be so uttered as to force a belief. I do love you. I know no other reason but that why you should be my wife. I have no other excuse to offer for coming to you again. You are the one thing in the world that to me has any charm. Can you be surprised that I should be persistent in asking for it?" He was looking at her still with the same gaze, and there seemed to be a power in his eye from which she could not escape. He was still standing with his right hand out, as though expecting, or at least hoping, that her hand might be put into his.

"How am I to answer you?" she said.

"With your love, if you can give it to me. Do you remember how you swore once that you would love me for ever and always."

"You should not remind me of that. I was a child then,—a naughty child," she added, smiling; "and was put to bed for what I did on that day."

"Be a child still."

"Ah, if we but could!"

"And have you no other answer to make me?"

"Of course I must answer you. You are entitled to an answer. Lord Chiltern, I am sorry that I cannot give you the love for which you ask."

"Never?"

"Never."

"Is it myself personally, or what you have heard of me, that is so hateful to you?"

"Nothing is hateful to me. I have never spoken of hate. I shall always feel the strongest regard for my old friend and playfellow. But there are many things which a woman is bound to consider before she allows herself so to love a man that she can consent to become his wife."

"Allow herself! Then it is a matter entirely of calculation."

"I suppose there should be some thought in it, Lord Chiltern."

There was now a pause, and the man's hand was at last allowed to drop, as there came no response to the proffered grasp. He walked once or twice across the room before he spoke again, and then he stopped himself closely opposite to her.

"I shall never try again," he said.

"It will be better so," she replied.

"There is something to me unmanly in a man's persecuting a girl. Just tell Laura, will you, that it is all over; and she may as well tell my father. Good-bye."

She then tendered her hand to him, but he did not take it,—probably did not see it, and at once left the room and the house.

"And yet I believe you love him," Lady Laura said to her friend in her anger, when they discussed the matter immediately on Lord Chiltern's departure.

"You have no right to say that, Laura."

"I have a right to my belief, and I do believe it. I think you love him, and that you lack the courage to risk yourself in trying to save him."

"Is a woman bound to marry a man if she love him?"

"Yes, she is," replied Lady Laura impetuously, without thinking of what she was saying; "that is, if she be convinced that she also is loved."

"Whatever be the man's character;—whatever be the circumstances? Must she do so, whatever friends may say to the contrary? Is there to be no prudence in marriage?"

"There may be a great deal too much prudence," said Lady Laura.

"That is true. There is certainly too much prudence if a woman marries prudently, but without love." Violet intended by this no attack upon her friend,—had not had present in her mind at the moment any idea of Lady Laura's special prudence in marrying Mr.

Kennedy; but Lady Laura felt it keenly, and knew at once that an arrow had been shot which had wounded her.

"We shall get nothing," she said, "by descending to personalities with each other."

"I meant none, Laura."

"I suppose it is always hard," said Lady Laura, "for any one person to judge altogether of the mind of another. If I have said anything severe of your refusal of my brother, I retract it. I only wish that it could have been otherwise."

Lord Chiltern, when he left his sister's house, walked through the flush and dirt to a haunt of his in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, and there he remained through the whole afternoon and evening. A certain Captain Clutterbuck joined him, and dined with him. He told nothing to Captain Clutterbuck of his sorrow, but Captain Clutterbuck could see that he was unhappy.

"Let's have another bottle of 'cham,'" said Captain Clutterbuck, when their dinner was nearly over. "'Cham' is the only thing to screw one up when one is down a peg."

"You can have what you like," said Lord Chiltern; "but I shall have some brandy-and-water."

"The worst of brandy-and-water is, that one gets tired of it before the night is over," said Captain Clutterbuck.

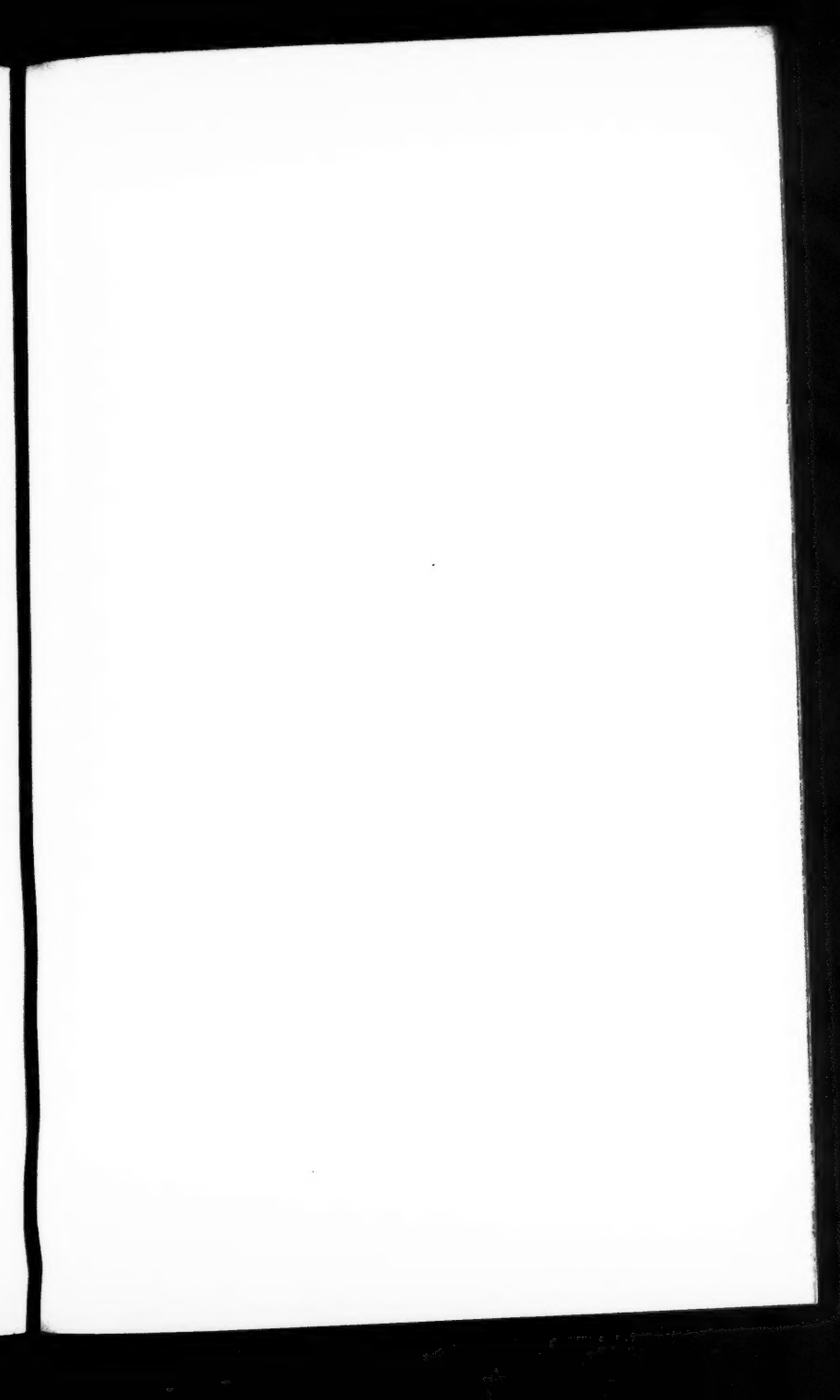
Nevertheless, Lord Chiltern did go down to Peterborough the next day by the hunting train, and rode his horse Bonebreaker so well in that famous run from Sutton springs to Gidding that after the run young Piles,—of the house of Piles, Sarsnet, and Gingham,—offered him three hundred pounds for the animal.

"He isn't worth above fifty," said Lord Chiltern.

"But I'll give you the three hundred," said Piles.

"You couldn't ride him if you'd got him," said Lord Chiltern.

"Oh, couldn't I!" said Piles. But Mr. Piles did not continue the conversation, contenting himself with telling his friend Grogram that that red devil Chiltern was as drunk as a lord.





"And do be punctual, Mr. Finn."

Phineas Finn. Chap. xxi. Page 750.